

OAKWOOD COLLEGE ARCHIVES

THE *A*EOLIANS



DIRECTORS
RECALL

PRECIOUS MEMORIES

ROY E. MALCOLM, EDITOR

OAKWOOD COLLEGE ARCHIVES

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THE AEOLIANS . . .

Directors Recall Precious Memories

ROY E. MALCOLM

Oakwood College Publishing Association
Huntsville, Alabama

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Salute to the Musical Achievements of the Oakwood College Aeolians

I was first introduced to the wonderful music of the Aeolians during the Centennial Celebration in 1996 and immediately adopted this wonderful group of artists as “my singers.” I have seen these outstanding students, with their individual gifts and combined talent, move a male audience to tears, a noisy child to silence.

As Mayor of the City of Huntsville, I feel that the Aeolians embody the heart, soul, and spirit of our city. Huntsville could not have a better representation than that which the Aeolians present when they appear on television, at the White House, or in concert. The Aeolians, in their unique and accomplished performances, are truly one of the most gifted and disciplined singing groups in America today.

Loretta Spencer, Mayor
City of Huntsville



Elegance, energy, effectiveness, excitement, efficiency, ebullience—the Aeolians of the 1973-85 era demonstrated all of these and more. Oakwood’s growth from approximately 600 students at the beginning of the 70’s to over 1,400 by the middle 80’s must be attributed in a large degree to the public favor that the Aeolians were so instrumental in establishing.

Alma Blackmon, the quintessential director of choirs, mother to her students, disciplinarian, humanitarian, patroness of the arts and devotee to the cause of Oakwood College, is to be remembered as the architect of the rich music produced during these years.

And, the legacy of Alma Blackmon and the Aeolians has not ceased. It continues today through the service of scores of her pupils now reproducing the Aeolian sound and recycling the Oakwood spirit in churches and schools throughout the land.

Sincerely,
Calvin B. Rock
Vice-President
General Conference of SDA



During the years of my privileged tenure at Oakwood College, I was fortunate enough to enjoy the world-class artistry of the Aeolians and experience the outstanding leadership of John Dennison, Ricky Little, Eurydice Osterman, and Lloyd Mallory, four of the directors of Oakwood’s premier singing group. Each one in his or her way provided the superb leadership and outstanding music selection that kept the Aeolians on the cutting edge of musical excellence.

Their appearances, whether on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” or as featured performers at the UNCF National banquet in New York City for President and Mrs. Bill Clinton, or in the sanctuary of the Oakwood College Church, brought glory to God and enormous publicity to the quality educational experience to be enjoyed at Oakwood College.

Benjamin F. Reaves
Vice-President
Adventist Health Systems



During 1944-1963, as always, Oakwood music was a constant provider of delight, spiritual uplift, and inspiration to the campus, the community, and the college's constituents nationwide.

Dr. Eva B. Dykes, the founder and first director of the Aeolians, deserves our undying gratitude for starting what for years has been a mighty river of joy and praise.

Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis, a member and soloist of the first Aeolians, was the second director. A special memory involved her rich soprano solos rendered just before the president's periodic sermons at the College Church. Services were then conducted in Moran Hall Auditorium, and Mrs. Pierre-Louis was the singer of choice.

Another musical treat of those years stemmed from the famous Cathedral Quartet (Ben Reaves, Bill Scales, James Edgecombe, E. Wayne Shepperd), whose many travels included New York's TV studios for a nationwide telecast. The Aeolians traveled extensively as well, mainly to the northern, eastern, and southern United States. In 1962, the Aeolians traveled to the West Coast. This tour was successful notwithstanding its undependable rolling stock.

Overall, the Oakwood Aeolians not only delighted and lifted audiences across the land, but also immensely enhanced Oakwood's name and fame throughout the country. We sincerely thank the Lord, the directors, and the singers for all their melodic memories.

Garland J. Millet, Ph.D.
President, 1954-1963



I know of no way to put into words the cherished memories I have of the impact that the Aeolians made on the life and legacy of Oakwood College during the years of my administration. There was an unbridgeable gap between the excellence which the college promoted and that which was performed by the Aeolians.

The magic of their renditions was nurtured through the consummate professionalism of directors Harold Anthony, Jon Robertson, and Marcus Thompson. The bond which exists between contemporary Aeolians and Aeolian Alumni is one of the most important traditions in Oakwood's history. The rich musical pathos of one generation of Aeolians is passed on to the next and is interwoven with friendships that are deep and that will last until God's tomorrow.

Frank W. Hale, Jr.
Vice Provost and
Professor Emeritus (Retired)
The Ohio State University

Dedication:

To all past and present members of the
College Choir and Aeolians
This book is dedicated.

To music lovers of all times who have
Appreciated and supported the
College's music program,
This book is dedicated.

More specifically, this book is dedicated
To the memory of one who laid
The foundation for quality choral music
At this institution —Eva B. Dykes, Ph.D.

Acknowledgment

The production of this volume would have been impossible without the cooperation of the contributing writers. Therefore, special thanks go to all of the directors who took time to do the necessary research and writing and then submit it in time for editing and publishing.

Special thanks go also to the Honorable Loretta Spencer, Mayor of Huntsville; former presidents Frank W. Hale, Jr., Garland J. Millet, Calvin B. Rock, and Benjamin F. Reaves for their salute; and to Delbert W. Baker, President, who wrote the foreword.

I thank also Mrs. Shirley Bailey for her dedication to the preparation of the manuscript as well as Mrs. Joyce Williams and Mrs. Minneola Dixon in the College Archives for providing valuable assistance in locating needed information.

I am most grateful to those kind persons who undertook the responsibility to serve as sponsors of this special project.

In a unique manner, Tim McClure, Allen Brown, Weldon Lewis, Patrick Wesley, and Samuel Anderson III have contributed significantly to this project. To them I am very grateful.

Most of all, I thank the Lord for blessing this project, thus making it a dream come true.

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Foreword

The Scriptures are replete with evidences of the exalted place music occupies in the divine plan for the universe. David, himself a musician, entreats mankind to serve the Lord with gladness; to come before His presence with singing and into His courts with praise (Psalm 100).

In like manner, music has played a major role in advancing the cause of Christian education at Oakwood College throughout its more than 100 years of quality service. Still vivid in the minds of many Oakwoodites are memories of outstanding choral ensembles such as Oakwood Jubilee Quartet, Oakwood's Nightingales and Oakwood Glee Club of the 1920's, the Alabama Singers and The A Cappella Choir of the 1930's, the Cathedral Quartet of the 1950's, etc.

The one musical group, however, that is as vibrant today as when it first began 53 years ago (1946) is the Aeolian Ensemble. This choir is our Musical Ministry for the 21st century.

In this book, *The Aeolians*, you will meet some very special people. They are the gifted musicians divinely selected to preserve the tradition and rich heritage of quality choral music at Oakwood College.

With the exception of founder Eva B. Dykes, Ph.D. (Deceased), each director relates highlights from his/her experiences with the Aeolians and/or College Choir since 1946. As such, the book is not the opinion or perception of one person. It is a compilation of real events written by the people involved.

This carefully illustrated volume is a significant contribution to Oakwood's musical history. It comes at a strategic moment in time as we approach the dawn of the new millennium with a mind set toward our aim:

Education . . . Excellence . . . Eternity

Delbert W. Baker, Ph.D.
President

Preface

This book is about the musical achievement of thousands of young people who, at some point in time, while pursuing a college education, shared the joy, the discipline, and learning associated with singing in a choral ensemble of national and international acclaim—the Oakwood College Aeolians.

The Aeolian ensemble was organized in 1946 from the nucleus of the larger College Choir. At different points in time both groups were combined as the College Choir. Other temporary groups such as “Ars Nova” or “Chamber Singers” were formed. However, re-established as a separate chorale in 1973, the Aeolians have remained steadfast.

While the college celebrated its centennial in 1996, the Aeolians celebrated their 50th year. It was at that time that the thought of compiling a volume of their achievements occurred to me. As coordinator for the Centennial, I relied heavily on the music of the Aeolians and College Choir for numerous events. In addition, I was manager of the Aeolians. As I devoted more time in working and traveling with the group in 1997 and 1998, I finally decided to begin the project.

At the end of the Aeolians’ inaugural 1998 summer fund-raising tour which yielded a very large sum in cash and pledges, in response to their musical tribute to me, I announced that I would do two things: (a) follow through with the production of the CD we spoke about during the tour, and (b) author a book about the group since its founding in 1946. This volume completes the two-fold initiative.

It is widely known that the Aeolians have performed in many countries abroad and in nearly every state in the Union. They have appeared on national television; sung in prestigious centers such as the Shrine Auditorium and Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles; Abyssinian Baptist Church and Carnegie Hall in New York; the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City; the Kennedy Center and the White House in Washington, DC. Now the reader can learn the interesting facts associated with those performances.

There have been several choral directors of the Music Department since 1946. The book is organized according to the order of the directors in service from 1946 to the present. Each director tells his/her “precious memories” episodes with those wonderful young singers on campus, or out of state, on the bus, or in the plane, home or abroad. In the case of Dr. Eva B. Dykes (deceased), founder of the Aeolians, Archivist Minneola Dixon, an early member of the chorale, prepared the article for the Dykes’ era.

It is hoped that this volume will provide information and inspiration to the reader.



Music

The earliest song recorded in the Bible from the lips of men was that glorious outburst of thanksgiving by the hosts of Israel at the Red Sea:

I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed
gloriously:

The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song,
And He is become my salvation:
This is my God, and I will praise Him;
My father's God, and I will exalt Him.

Education, p. 162.

E. G. White



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AEOLIANS!

A New Sound of Music



Eva Beatrice Dykes, Ph.D.
Founder/Director
1946-1956

by
Minneola Dixon, M.L.S., Archivist



About the Director

Eva Beatrice Dykes

Eva Beatrice Dykes was born in Washington, DC, on August 13, 1893. She graduated from Howard University with a B.A. degree, summa cum laude. She attended Radcliffe College and received another Bachelor of Arts degree, magna cum laude, and a Master of Arts degree. In 1921, she graduated from Radcliffe on June 22 with a Ph.D. degree. She was one of the first black women to receive a doctorate in the United States. She was the first to meet the requirements for the doctoral degree in America. She specialized in English, Latin, German, and Greek language studies. She taught at Walden University in Nashville, Tennessee, and at Dunbar High School and Howard University in Washington, DC. In 1944, she joined the faculty of Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama, where she served as Chair of the English Department and the Division of Humanities.

Dr. Dykes authored several books, including *The Negro in English Romantic Thought*. A biography of her life entitled *She Fulfilled the Impossible Dream* was written by DeWitt Williams. Eva Dykes was a Message Magazine columnist for many years. She was an accomplished pianist and organist. During her lifetime she actively held many church offices and became a very prominent leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was one of the Black Adventists who started a movement that led to the formation of regional conferences.

As an outstanding and dedicated educator, Dr. Dykes received the Certificate of Merit from the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in 1973 when the Oakwood College Library was named in her honor. In 1975, Eva B. Dykes received, in Vienna, Austria, at the World General Conference Session, a Citation of Excellence Award in recognition of her contribution to the SDA world program of Christian education. Dr. Dykes served as a notable educator for more than 50 years. She died on October 29, 1986, at the age of 93.

—Jannith Lewis, Ph.D., Director of Library Services
and Frances Bliss, Ph.D., Professor of Education
Oakwood College

Aeolians in Concert



Eva B. Dykes
Director

A New Sound of Music

By Minneola Dixon, M.L.S., Archivist

The celebrated Aeolian Chorale which has performed in nearly every state of the Union, the countries of The Bahamas, Bermuda, Canada, Great Britain, Jamaica, Romania, and the Virgin Islands, traces its origin to a woman who was a legend and educator par excellence. Her name was **Eva B. Dykes**.

While serving as chair and professor in the Department of English, Dr. Dykes also directed the College Choir. The choir was a selected ensemble balanced for four and eight-part singing. It was open to students and staff, and students could obtain two credit hours for a semester. Works of leading composers were studied. In addition to public programs, the choir served the College Church and toured other colleges and schools as well as churches.

Dr. Dykes saw the need for a smaller music ensemble which would be more cost effective for travel. From the nucleus of the College Choir, members were selected for the organization of another chorale which she called *The Aeolians*. The name was derived from Greek mythology. Aeolus was the Greek god or controller of the winds and ruler of the floating island of Aeolia. He bound the winds in a cave but only at the bidding of Zeus did he liberate them. When wind flows over a cylinder or stretched wire, it produces what is known as "aeolian sound." The aeolian harp, for example, is based on this principle.

Dr. Dykes was a student of Greek. No wonder she chose a name for her select group of singers that reflects her academic preparation.

HANDEL'S MESSIAH

It was Dr. Dykes who began the annual presentation of Handel's *Messiah* (excerpts) at Christmas. The Oakwood Oratorio Society under her direction in 1946



gave the first program on campus with good support from surrounding areas.

In subsequent years, the Huntsville Symphony joined in the annual event which helped to strengthen ties between the college and the local community.

Speaking of community, Dr. Dykes also assisted in local humanitarian projects. She headed the Madison County New Mothers' March against crippling birth defects, arthritis and polio in 1960.

As leader of the door-to-door drive, Dykes recruited over 200 women to raise funds for patient care and control of three major crippling diseases. She also sponsored a benefit movie, rummage sale, and other fund-raisers for the local March of Dimes project.

MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIRECTOR

I enrolled at Oakwood in 1947, a year after the Aeolians was organized (1946). As a high school graduate with honors in choir and orchestra, I was chosen to join the College Choir directed by Dr. Dykes. Later I advanced to membership with the



The Aeolians, double octet from Oakwood College, as they appeared in a recent performance. Dr. Eva Dykes, director, is in the center of the first row.

elite Aeolians. I was also one of her readers. At that time, the Aeolians consisted of a double octet—eight young ladies and eight young men who could perform separately.

At a lyceum program on campus, on October 28, 1951, the Aeolians presented a concert of spirituals including *Nobody Knows de Trouble I Seen*; *I Got a Home*; *Climb Up*; *Steal Away*; *This Train*. Joni Mae Robinson Pierre-Louis was the soloist for *Little David Play on Your Harp* and *Has Anybody Here Seen My Lord?* I was asked to sing *I Want Jesus to Walk With Me*.

Other soloists were Lois Bookhardt and Russell Bates. Evelyn Jackson was accompanist. The program was a major success. The audience wanted more, and we returned several times with encores, namely:

You Better Mind
Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Lord, I Want to Be a Christian
Down by the Riverside
He Scandalized My Name



SOUTHERN ACCENT

With the Aeolians: left, Evelyn Jackson, accompanist; Johnnie Mae Robinson, Russell Bates, Lois Bookhardt, Minneola Dabney, soloists; and Dr. Eva B. Dykes, director.

Dr. Dykes told the audience how the Negro spirituals came into existence during the days of slavery. The slaves had no idea that they were contributing something new to the field of music; their songs were just the spontaneous outgrowth of their feelings. The themes used by these unknown bards have often been utilized by modern composers in writing symphonies.



SAMUEL JACKSON, a very fine and accomplished musician, became chair of the Department of Music in 1951. He relieved Dr. Dykes of the responsibility of directing the College Choir since she was chair of the Division of Humanities and the Department of English.

Jackson also organized and directed the male chorus and traveled extensively with them. He served in this capacity until 1955.

LADIES CHORUS

Aeolians' activities during the early to mid fifties appear limited. Instead, we find Dr. Dykes associated with the Ladies Chorus which she organized and directed.



TRAVEL

The Aeolians under Dr. Dykes traveled to churches, colleges, and schools in the South. There was also an annual trip to Chicago, Illinois.

CHANGING THE GUARD

Dr. Dykes passed the baton of choral activity to her successor, Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis, in 1956 although she continued to teach until 1968. She was invited back in 1970 to teach in the English Department. She taught until 1973. Her work as a professor of English, Church and community volunteer, choral director and accompanist, Christian role model, has been noticed by many as reflected by the following citations which appeared in the *Oakwood Magazine*, 1986:

- Dr. Dykes was a living stone . . . a living sacrifice.
—Benjamin F. Reaves
- Hers was a life that became its own glowing tribute.
—Garland J. Millet
- She was humble . . . always correct in manners.
—C. E. Moseley
- She was dynamic . . . inspiring . . . exacting . . . excellent role model.
—Jannith Lewis
- She was one who taught us excellence.
—Charles Dudley

Eva B. Dykes Library Dedication



Dr. Garland J. Millet reads the announcement as Dr. Dykes listens attentively.



REFLECTIONS

I am proud to have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Dykes from various perspectives—as a student in her class; a member of the College Choir/Aeolians; and student worker. I learned a great deal from her that I found useful in later years. I am even more pleased that the tradition of quality choral music at our alma mater, Oakwood College, is being maintained at the highest level of excellence. How thrilling to hear the Aeolians under present director, Mr. Lloyd Mallory, in their magnificent rendition of the hymn:

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy Grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise. . . .

Minneola Dixon
Archivist





A Gift of God

The history of the songs of the Bible is full of suggestion as to the uses and benefits of music and song. Music is often perverted to serve purposes of evil, and it thus becomes one of the most alluring agencies of temptation. But, rightly employed, it is a precious gift of God, designed to uplift the thoughts to high and noble themes, to inspire and elevate the soul.

Education, p. 167



AEOLIAN RENAISSANCE

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Joni Mae Pierre-Louis, M.A.
Director, 1956-1965



About the Director

Joni Mae Pierre-Louis

Joni Mae Pierre-Louis was born near Nashville, Tennessee, to Ann and John Robinson. Her mother was a gifted vocalist.

At a very young age, Joni Mae and her family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where she attended elementary and secondary school. She sang in the school choir at Central High and was an honor student there.

During her junior and senior years, she was privileged to study piano and voice with two prominent musicians: Leota Palmer-Apple (mother of the famed concert pianist, Natalie Hinderas) and Gretchen Garnett, soprano. Both were associated with the Cleveland Institute of Music and Western Reserve University.

Joni Mae enrolled at Oakwood College as a music major in 1946, the year of the founding of the Aeolians. She became a member of this group and sang as soloist for many concerts, oratorios, and cantatas between 1946 and 1948. She also traveled as soloist with the Male Chorus under the direction of Calvin E. Moseley. Joni Mae was a member of the Women's Trio which was sent by the college on many promotional tours. Cathrine Gibson-Wagner and Mary Ricks-Gentry were the other members of the trio.

In 1950 Joni Mae received her B.A. degree in music and French at Andrews University (formerly Emmanuel Missionary College), and immediately began graduate studies at Northwestern University. She continued her studies at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and eventually completed the master's at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Her emphasis was in choral conducting and voice.

She joined the Oakwood College Faculty in 1954 as a music teacher and became director of the College Choir/Aeolians in 1956, a position she held faithfully until 1965.

Joni Mae married Sam Pierre-Louis in 1952. The union produced four children: Philip, Colleen, Desmond, and Janine.

Aeolians



Joni Mae Pierre-Louis
Director

Aeolian Renaissance

By Joni Pierre-Louis, M.A.
Choral Director, Retired

I was appointed director of the College Choir in 1956. At that time, the Male Chorus was the official touring ensemble for the college. The time had come for the choir to do some distant travel outside of Alabama. Traveling is always a great incentive in getting students to join and remain in a choral group.

Information about the College Choir was sent to pastors and church organizations across the nation. Of course, the cost of transportation, meals, and housing had to be shared by the host organization if an invitation was extended to us. It was not very long before churches began to invite the choir to various events, and we began to travel to the South, North, and East. By this time the choir had grown so that it would require more than one bus to transport everyone to our destination.

From the large choir approximately 40 voices were selected to form a tour group. This was the rebirth of the Aeolians.

AEOLIANS AT SMC

One performance that comes readily to mind was our visit to Southern Missionary College in 1956 on September 29. We were introduced by Southern's Music Department chair Dr. Lauritzen. We were warmly received by a capacity audience.

The Aeolians' renditions included Ringwald's *One God and Hymn to Music*; Beethoven's *Hallelujah Chorus* and Zingarelli's *Go Not Far From Me*." The program also featured David Green, tenor; a trio composed of Naomi Dennison, Barbara Moseley, and Beverly White; and the Men's Glee Club. The Glee Club was directed by Robert Taylor. The members were the Aeolian Men. The female soloist who sang with the Glee Club was your humble servant. We received a tremendous ovation following the rendition of *Has Anybody Here Seen My Jesus*. In fact, *Scandalize*, by George O'Bryant, resulted in a series of encores. We were accompanied by **Mrs. Anne Galley** at the piano and **Mrs. Inez Booth** at the organ.

Members of the Aeolians were: Henry Barbour, James Bowman, Alfred Boyce, Gwendolyn Bradley, Phyllis Bryan, Sylvene Carlyle, Naomi Dennison, Cordell Evans, Henry Flowers, David Green, Martha Hardy, Kathryn Hill, El Nora Holland, Eva Jenkins, Mrs. Vivianne Jones, Edward Mattox, Barbara Moseley, Hector Mouzon, George O'Bryant, Albert Reid, Marshall Seard, Elbert Sheppard, Robert Sparks, Harry Swinton, Robert Taylor, Eunice Vanderberg, Gerald Wells, Barbara White, Beverly White, and Julian Williams.

THE MESSIAH

Dr. Eva B. Dykes began the tradition of presenting the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah* at the end of the fall term with the Huntsville Symphony. My first experience as the conductor came on December 16, 1956, with an 80-voice choir



Mrs. Pierre-Louis directing the college choir in the annual presentation of Handel's "Messiah."



MESSIAH SOLOISTS

Willie Lothan, Bass; Josiephine Phillips, contralto; Ruby Smith, soprano;
Alfred Boyce, baritone; Allen Reid, tenor; David Green, tenor.

and six soloists. The program attracted many Huntsville citizens as well as guests from Nashville, Chattanooga, and Birmingham.

The guest soloist was Willie C. Lothan, bass, from Nashville, Tennessee. Oakwood soloists were: Ruby Smith, soprano; Josiephine Phillips, contralto; David Green and Allen Reid, tenors; and Alfred Boyce, baritone. The program, Praise the Lord, was a great success.

The following year, December 15, 1957, we were accompanied by the Huntsville String Ensemble. The guest soloists were: Mrs. Williams Schwartz, contralto, of Huntsville, Alabama; and Mr. John Pitts, bass, of Columbus, Ohio. The Oakwood soloists were: Carole Crosdale, soprano; Dorothy Dorsett, soprano; Standley Gellineau, tenor; and George O'Bryant, baritone.



College Choir directed by J. M. Pierre-Louis
Accompanied by Huntsville String Ensemble

SOME AEOLIAN MEMBERS OF THE ERA

Fred Anderson
Vivian Barron
Michael Bernard
Paul Brantley
Joyce Bryant
Carol Byers
Gwendolyn Collins
Clifton Davis
Garland Dulan
Jeanette Dulan
Gwen Foster
Standley Gellineau
Conrad Gill
Richard Hamilton
Auldwin Humphrey

Adele Humphrey
Fitzgerald Jenkins
Willie Lee, Jr.
Ronald Lindsey
Timothy McDonald
Elaine McKnight
Lorraine Miles
Carol Moore
Sandra Pearson
Walter Pearson
Gerald Pennick
Linda Pennick
Jacqueline Ross
George Sampson
Rosalyn Savory

Gloria Singleton
James Street
John Street
Helvius Thompson
Ivan Warden
Eula Washington
Clinton Williams
DeWitt Williams
Everard Williams
James Winston
Jacqueline Winston
Carol Wright
Henry Wright
William Wright



Mrs. J. M. Pierre-Louis, Director
1958 Concert in Florence, Alabama

TOURS

- **West Coast**

In 1963, the Aeolians set out on a historic tour of the west coast. The tour included programs in Dallas; Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas; and Phoenix, Arizona.

In Los Angeles, the Aeolians performed at the Long Beach Convention Center for the Pacific Union Youth Congress. The major concert was sponsored by the University SDA Church.

In Northern California, the choir sang in several bay area churches. The grand finale of the west coast tour was an outstanding performance at Pacific Union College.

Accompanying us on the tour was President Garland J. Millet. As a graduate of Pacific Union College (B.A., M.A.), he was very pleased with the great public relations impact made by the choir. He presented promotional messages along the way, and especially at his alma mater.



Joni Pierre-Louis
Director



Garland J. Millet
President

- **East Coast**

The success of our west coast tour led to invitations from many directions. Tours of the east coast over the years included concerts in Washington, DC; Baltimore, Md.; Philadelphia, Penn.; New York, NY; and Boston, Mass.

Southern trips took us to Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; Nashville, Tennessee, etc. **Northern** travels led to Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio; Berrien Springs, Michigan; and Cicero, Indiana.

NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT



On December 13, 1964, our choir was taped by WHNT television station for rebroadcast during the Christmas Season. The choir did excerpts from the *Messiah* by Handel. The event was sponsored by The College Fund/UNCF.



The Aeolians also sang at the 1965 New York World's Fair. While in the big city the group made an appearance on the popular NBC program, "Strike It Rich." The Aeolians did a magnificent rendition of the song *Great Day*. **Ms. Joyce Bryant**, the world renowned singer who gave up "show biz" and attended Oakwood in the 50's, sang with the Aeolians as a student. She joined us in New York and was interviewed by the TV program host.

In New York we also did a special concert recording in the studios of the Columbia Broadcasting Service.

A primary reason for our appearance on the NBC program was to raise funds to purchase robes for the Choir/Aeolians. We were trying to "Strike It Rich." Another Oakwood music group, "The Cathedral Quartet," won \$500 on its appearance on this program in 1956. As a result of the successes of the Aeolians, funds came in and the robes were purchased.

Including my years as director of the Aeolians, I served Oakwood for 13 years. It was very challenging meeting the demands of teaching, directing, raising a family, and traveling. Yet I experienced many rich blessings from the Lord as the Music Department continued to grow and the college attained and maintained recognition and accreditation. TO GOD BE THE GLORY!



“Singing Unto Zion”

The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35: 10, R.V.).

They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together unto the goodness of the Lord: . . . and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all (Jeremiah 31:12).



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AEOLIANS:

A Tradition of Musical Excellence



Harold L. Anthony, M.A.
Director
1965-1968
1971-1973



About the Director

Harold L. Anthony, Sr.

Harold L. Anthony, Sr., a native of Marshall, Texas, and a graduate of H. B. Pemberton High School, initiated his college training at Fisk University, Nashville, Tennessee. After military service, he earned a B.A. degree at Pacific Union College, Angwin, California. The M.A. and Professional Diploma in music and music education were received from Columbia University Teachers College, New York, New York.

Mr. Anthony has served as chairman of the Music Department at both Pine Forge Academy, Pine Forge, Pennsylvania, and Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama. During his tenure at each of these institutions, he directed and toured extensively throughout the United States with each of their concert choirs and ensembles. He also served as Minister of Music, and taught a wide variety of course offerings, and encountered an occasional second-generation student.

Mr. Anthony married the former Nell Rice in 1964, and relocated in Pottstown, Penn. Mrs. Nell Anthony, Ed.D. held positions at Alabama A & M University in Huntsville, Alabama, ranging from instructor in elementary education to Vice President for Academic Support and Public Services. She retired in 1993.

Mr. Anthony currently teaches music part-time at Calhoun Community College, Huntsville, Alabama, and privately in his home. He faithfully serves as church pianist each Saturday and Sunday in the Huntsville community.

The couple has one son, Harold, Jr.

AEOLIANS . . .



Harold L. Anthony
Director

A Tradition of Musical Excellence

By Harold L. Anthony, M.A.
Chair, Music Department, Retired

It was the summer of 1965 when I was invited to join the Oakwood College faculty as director of choral activities, following the tenure of Joni Pierre-Louis. My recent conversion to Adventism in California reinforced God's complete control in the affairs of men.

From the creation of the world, God knew that a singing group, "The Aeolians," would become a tradition at Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama. He had prepared, in minute detail, the leadership for each transition in the flow of events, and will continue until He appears in the clouds in glory and triumph.

JOB ASSIGNMENT

Upon arrival on the campus of Oakwood in September 1965, there were no lengthy instructions as to what constituted the role and legacy of the Aeolians as an ensemble. The total preparation for this specific task had been incidental acquaintances with former Aeolians from the era of Dr. Eva B. Dykes who described a small ensemble that sang both sacred and secular repertoire. They reminisced of the early and late disciplined rehearsals and sang excerpts of their repertoire.

The second encounter occurred during the spring of 1958. I was one of the chaperones for the seniors of Pine Forge Institute to the college days activities at Oakwood College. Masterful performances by the Aeolians were witnessed under the directorship of Professor Joni Pierre-Louis during the assemblies. Later, reports of former Pine Forge choir members' acceptance in the Aeolians were always gratifying news. However, live performances or professional recordings of the group were limited in Pennsylvania. Concerts were scheduled in Washington, DC, or, perhaps, New York City—a bit distant from Pine Forge.

My responsibilities included directing the College Choir and the Aeolians. Total membership ranged from 75 to 125 voices for both groups. Membership was determined by audition. Selection criteria included demonstrated solo caliber, aesthetic sensitivity and willingness to study to improve personal skills.

REHEARSALS

Separate rehearsals were conducted for the ensembles. They were taught to sight read music, to sing in other languages, and to understand the interpretive style and texture for each selection to be performed. The chorales acquired repertoires of more difficult music which included both sacred and secular works.

AEOLIANS/COLLEGE CHOIR

The Aeolian understood that he/she was to be a mentor to choir members in

their section. Some Aeolians even initiated sectional rehearsals in the dormitories to assist choir members with their parts.

Aeolians were principal soloists for College Choir performances at church and the annual fall presentation of excerpts from *The Messiah* by Handel.

TRAVEL

In the spring choir tour performances, the College Choir would sing anthems and spirituals during the first half of the program. The Aeolians, dressed in special formal attire, sang the third section of the program after the intermission. The College Choir would return to conclude the program.

• First Choir Tour

My initial tour with the College Choir/Aeolians occurred April 28-May 12, 1966. Places where we performed included Indianapolis, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; Rochester, New York; and Brooklyn, New York.

On some special weekend trips when we traveled to places like Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Cleveland, Ohio, transportation was by chartered bus. Occasionally transportation was provided by an entourage of faculty, staff, and student cars. We praise the Lord that no accidents or calamities ever occurred to mar those successful and enjoyable adventures.

• West Coast

The spring tour of 1967 took us to California. Approximately 40 students traveled by bus, leaving Huntsville on March 17. The choir tour schedule included concerts at:

- Loma Linda University Church March 17
- Tamarind Avenue Church 18
- White Memorial Church 18
- San Diego 19
- Bakersfield 20
- Fresno 21
- Stockton 22
- Sacramento 23
- San Francisco 24
- Oakland 25

Faculty chaperones were Mrs. Inez Booth and Mr. Talbert O. Shaw.

Ready for the Journey . . .



Harold L. Anthony
Conductor

Handel's Messiah



Following tradition, the Oakwood College Chorus with the Huntsville String Ensemble, gave two presentations of the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah in December, 1966. Below, Raymond Humphrey, baritone, sings "Why do the Nations Rage?"





Sopranos Brenda Spraggins (left) and Andrea Bradford were among the featured soloists for the Messiah presentations.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

My tenure with the Aeolians was interrupted by a leave of absence for graduate study. However, there were some highlights which often bring to mind precious memories. They include:

- The tour of the State of California.
- The tour of the State of Florida.
- Significant increase of voice students (300%) in the Department of Music. This meant an increase also in music faculty.
- Christ-centered musical service to God as an alternative to ostentatious performances, or “music for music’s sake!”

Aeolian members of the late sixties are exhibiting dedicated service to God around the globe. Some are music professionals, while others provide outstanding services as physicians, attorneys, ministers, nurses, teachers, etc., to the world community.

It was my pleasure to pass the Aeolian baton into the capable hands of my successor, Mrs. Alma Montgomery Blackmon in 1973, the end of my **second** term as director. Drs. Jon Robertson and Marcus Thompson were directors after my first term—1965-68.



The Power of Song

*A*s the children of Israel, journeying through the wilderness, cheered their way by the music of sacred song, so God bids His children today gladden their pilgrim life. There are few means more effective for fixing His words in the memory than repeating them in song. And such song has wonderful power. It has power to subdue rude and uncultivated natures; power to quicken thought and to awaken sympathy, to promote harmony of action, and to banish the gloom and foreboding that destroy courage and weaken effort.

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THE BEST OF TIMES

The Worst of Times

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Jon Robertson, D.M.A.
Director, 1968-1970



About the Director

Jon Robertson

Maestro Jon Robertson enjoys a distinguished and multifaceted career. At age nine he made his debut in Town Hall, New York, as a concert pianist. He performed recitals throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and the Caribbean while a student of Ethel Leginska of Los Angeles. His first performance at Royce Hall occurred when he was 13! Having established his reputation as a brilliant pianist, he was awarded a full scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music where he earned the B.M., M.S., and D.M.A. degrees as a student of Beveridge Webster.

It was at Juilliard that Maestro Robertson began to pursue seriously his interest in conducting. He studied choral conducting with Abraham Kaplan at Juilliard and orchestral conducting with Richard Pittman of the New England Conservatory. He later traveled to Sweden and East Germany to study with Maestro Herbert Blomstedt, former conductor of the San Francisco Symphony. Their association was to be long-lived as Robertson served as Blomstedt's assistant at the International Orchestral Conducting Festival from 1976-1986.

Dr. Robertson served as chair of the Department of Music (1967-70) at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama. He held the rank of professor, and was choral director.

The Thayer Conservatory of Music Orchestra offered Dr. Robertson the post of conductor and music director in 1972. He conducted the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra in Norway from 1979 to 1987. Since 1982 he has been conductor and music director of the Redlands Symphony Orchestra. His guest conducting appearances have taken him to the far reaches of the globe including the Beijing Central Philharmonic in China; the Gävle Symphony in Sweden; the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, and the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra. He makes regular appearances with the Armenian Philharmonic Orchestra, which has named him Principal Guest Conductor.

Dr. Robertson has served as a panelist for the California Arts Council Organizational Grants and Touring panel and for the National Endowment for the Arts and is frequently in demand as a lecturer and adjudicator. He joined the UCLA faculty in 1992 and became chair of the Department of Music the following year. In June 1998 he was given the University's Fair and Open Academic Environment Award in recognition of the extensive outreach programs he initiated, which bring music enrichment

ment programs to many who might otherwise not be able to experience them through concerts, clinics, and private instruction given by UCLA students.

His recordings and publications include:

Piano: *Songs Without Words*. Works of Mendelssohn, Schubert, Beethoven, Liszt. Chapel Records

Alleluia (selection of Classical Choral Works). Sacred Arts Records

Psalm of Praise (Choral Composition). Tempo Publications

Live Performances of Redlands Symphony Concerts

The San Francisco Symphony's subscription concert

Originally from the island of Jamaica, Dr. Robertson is married to the beautiful Florence Bellande of Haiti. They have three lovely daughters: Nadege, Sabine, and Berangere.



The Best of Times. . .

By Jon Robertson, D.M.A.
Chair, Department of Music, U.C.L.A.

In the words of Charles Dickens: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times. . . ." The year was 1967. Oakwood's new president was entering his second year and campus expectations and anticipation ran high.

The new president, Frank W. Hale, Jr., came to office with great vision and innovations par excellence. He envisioned a new library with a convocation center; a new men's dormitory; a college center with the usual facilities for service to students; establishment of an endowment fund; a new entrance from Sparkman Drive; new academic degree programs; faculty advancement; enrollment increase, etc. All of this generated excitement. **Indeed, it was the best of times.**

At the same time, the civil rights movement was gaining greater momentum under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tensions were high in the South. Concomitant with this was the growing student unrest with regard to their rights on campuses across the nation.

Oakwood, one of the more conservative SDA campuses, was not spared the tension of administration versus student activists.

Some students who had participated in or witnessed or been otherwise acquainted with the civil rights "struggle" . . . enrolled at Oakwood and, though pursuing an education in a Christian environment, nevertheless brought with them a few questionable aspects of what they considered popular and favored components of the rights movement such as pent-up anger, ruthless redress of wrongs real or imaginary, violent resistance to all authority, and a general spirit of rage (*Oakwood! A Vision Splendid*, p. 205).

A REAL CHALLENGE

It was into this milieu and at this time of unrest that I accepted the chairmanship of the Department of Music. At age 24, it was a real challenge, but at the same time a wonderful opportunity to make a difference and a contribution to the cultural, academic, and Spiritual development of deserving youth.

STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

I found a campus full of talented young people eager to achieve their highest music potential. The centerpiece of the department, and certainly the jewel of the school, was the Aeolians. They were an elite choral group that had garnered unparalleled recognition through the SDA denomination, the Huntsville community, and the nation under past leadership of musicians including founder Eva B. Dykes, Joni Pierre-Louis, and Harold Anthony.

My first year as chair was spent on administrative matters—setting up goals and



objectives and strategies to achieve them. In my second year I assumed more responsibility in instruction and took the reins of the choral program (1968).

AUDITIONS

I vividly recall the first day of school when auditions were held. One glorious voice after another entered my studio, leaving me overwhelmed by the wealth of musical talent with which the Lord had blessed Oakwood.

After selecting the best of the best, we had 110 voices consisting of:

40 basses, 10 of which could sing low C's
30 tenors, 20 sopranos, 20 altos

At rehearsal, the sound of this ensemble was magnificent. When I recall those voices—that sound, chills still overtake me.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

The first week of school is always busy with registration, orientation, purchasing books, getting settled in rooms, and a host of other activities. But the first Sabbath service of the school sets the tone for worship for the rest of the year. Consequently, the administration very much wanted a choir prepared to sing. So when I announced to the group that we had to be ready to sing in church in only a few days hence, the look of surprise on their faces was unforgettable.

The worship service in those days was conducted in Moran Hall Auditorium which seats about 450. The platform literally overflows with 110 people, but it gave the appearance of an angelic host when the choir appeared in uniform apparel singing "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" at the beginning of worship. They were elevated on risers that reached across the stage.

The choral selection for the service was a powerful work by Cousins, entitled *Glorious Everlasting*. It was indeed glorious, lifting the spirit of the church to the heavens. What a Sabbath it was! What conviction to the congregation! What inspiration to the members of the chorale!

COLLEGE CHOIR/AEOLIANS COMBINATION

Some members of the Aeolians may have felt it too strenuous to sing and rehearse for both College Choir and Aeolians. I maintained that to be a member of the Aeolian ensemble, one also had to be in the College Choir. This combination would provide the very best music performance for Sabbath services. Consequently, the two ensembles were combined.



LITERATURE OF THE CLASSICS

As an academic institution dedicated to the development of the whole man, Oakwood's music should include performance of the great literature of the classics. This belief was implemented in order to broaden and enhance students' education. So we embarked on a thorough survey of the great literature. On May 18, 1969, for our annual year-end concert, the choir undertook the extraordinary challenge of performing the Verdi *Requiem* with members of the Huntsville Symphony. The chorus performed like seasoned professionals with the Huntsville Symphony at its best. Soloists included:

Soprano	- Carolyn Rhodes Bisel
Mezzo Soprano	- Ruth Sherman
Tenor	- Stanley Ware
Bass	- Eugene Brasher

ENCORE: LOS ANGELES' SHRINE AUDITORIUM

Word of the outstanding performance of the chorus and Huntsville Symphony was spread abroad. As a result, alumni and friends of the college in Los Angeles, California; Oakwood administration and members of the Huntsville community raised thousands of dollars for a repeat performance at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on Easter Sunday 1970. The performance received rave review in the *Los Angeles Times*.

LYCEUM SERIES

On May 31, 1970, the choir presented a special program in the Lyceum Series *The Choral Fantasia* (op 80) by Beethoven. The soloists were Carolyn Ward, Soprano; Donna Cartwright, soprano. (*Stephanie Powell, alto; Edwin Humphrey, tenor; Michael Gaddy, tenor; and Freeman Davis, bass.)



Carolyn Ward



Donna Cartwright

*Photos not on file.

STABAT MATER

In Part II, the choir performed Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with soloists Wanda Middleton, soprano; Edwina Humphrey, mezzo-soprano; Stanley Ware, tenor; and Freeman Davis, bass.

The occasion was an evening of musical excellence.



Wanda Middleton



Edwina Humphrey



Stanley Ware

MEMBERS OF THE CHORUS:

SOPRANO	ALTOS	TENORS	BASSES
Donna Cartwright	Sharon Carter	Lee Davison	Richard Brown
Annette Davis	Shirley Cody	John Hudson	Dennis Buckley
Lorna Dawkins	Gwendolyn Dixon	Edwin Humphrey	Charles Dudley
Delores Holmes	Marjorie Felder	Allan Johnston	Steven Duncan
Edrene Malcolm	Suzette Flood	David McCottry	Joe Hutchinson
Cynthia Nutt	Bonita Johnson	Michael McGaddie	Ernest Kinsey
Geraldine Robinson	Stephanie Powell	Tom Smith	Harold Lumsey
Carol Wilson	Gazetta Reavers	Willie Taylor	Ed Lyons
	Marguerite Stewart	Leonard Tucker	Lloyd Mathews
	Rejeanna Tyler	Abraham Weekes	Olson Perry
	Rosalyn Ward		Thomas Seward
	Kathy Woodfork		Alonzo Wilson
			Herman Wright

In addition to the many excellent choir voices, there were also magnificent solo voices. In fact, on one occasion I personally drove to New York taking with me four of the outstanding voices for auditioning at the Juilliard School of Music. They were the four soloists used in *Stabat Matar*. All were accepted at the Juilliard.

THE ARS NOVA SINGERS

To highlight those especially good voices, we decided to organize a new group called *Ars Nova* Singers, meaning new art singers. They became the primary travel group because they were small in number. The tour program was called "The Fine Arts Showcase." Often President Frank W. Hale, Jr., appeared with the group. In fact, President Hale received a private gift of \$25,000 for the purchase of two eight-passenger limousines primarily for the travels of the Fine Arts Showcase. Barry C. Black, a student gifted in speech, was a member of the Showcase. He presented renditions of famous speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King. **It was the best of times!**

The *Ars Nova* Singers could stand shoulder to shoulder with singers from any college music department in the world.

CARNEGIE HALL PERFORMANCE

Here I must give credit to the late Mr. Stanley Ware, one of the students I recommended to the Juilliard where he completed his undergraduate work and eventually signed his first Metropolitan Opera contract in May 1989.

Ware obtained the Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and taught voice at Oakwood College. In 1972 he led the College Choir on tour to New York to join me for a performance of Verdi's *Requiem*.



Inset: Mr. Stanley Ware, Tenor

With the American Symphony Orchestra, the Oakwood College Choir was superb in our third performance of the *Requiem*. A *New York Times* review stated:

"The Oakwood College Chorus would have done justice to any performance of the Verdi *Requiem* in the world."

Here the Oakwood College Chorus was ranked with the world's best. It was the pride of achievement of a black college choir known for excellence in spirituals and gospel music, now to access the classical world with aplomb. Yes, this choir could do it all.

REFLECTIONS

As I look back on those days (the good old days), I am deeply touched to recall the love, discipline, and talent of those young people. I have heard many college choruses since then, but none, in my opinion, match the power, depth, beauty, and vitality of the Oakwood voices.

Working with those singers has been and will always remain a most special part of my emotional, spiritual, and professional life. **Indeed, it was the best of times.**



“Song of Hope . . .”

*A*midst the deepening shadows of earth's last great crisis, God's light will shine brightest, and the song of hope and trust will be heard in clearest and loftiest strains.

In that day shall this song be sung
in the land of Judah;

We have a strong city;
Salvation will God appoint for
walls and bulwarks.

Open ye the gates,
That the righteous nation which
keepeth the truth may enter in.

Thou will keep him in perfect
peace,
Whose mind is stayed on Thee:
because he trusteth in Thee.

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YE SHALL HAVE A SONG



Marcus Thompson, D.M.A.
Director 1970-1971



About the Director

Marcus Aurelius Thompson

Marcus Aurelius Thompson, son of Wilmore and Hattie Thompson (O.C. '41), was born in the Bronx, New York. He began his musical studies at the age of six with the study of the violin and eight years later was accepted as a scholarship student of the violin at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. Since graduating, Dr. Thompson has pursued a career of performance on the viola and the viola d'amore.

Dr. Thompson has earned critical acclaim since his New York recital debut in 1968 as winner of the Young Concert Artists International Auditions. He has since performed as soloist with the Boston Pops, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the National Symphony, the Atlanta Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. As a recitalist, he has appeared in series throughout the Americas, including New York's Carnegie Recital Hall and Metropolitan Museum, Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Minneapolis' Orchestra Hall, San Francisco's Herbst Theater, and Teatro Nacional in the Dominican Republic. An artist member of the Boston Chamber Music Society, he is a frequent guest of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; the Vermeer, Muir, Emerson, Orion, and Audubon string quartets; and chamber music festivals in Amsterdam, Dubrovnik, Marlboro, Santa Fe, Seattle, Sitka, Spoleto, and Vail.

He obtained the B.M., M.S., and D.M.A. at The Juilliard School. He studied violin with Louise Behrend; viola with Walter Trampler; additional studies with Abraham Skernick, Michael Avsharian, and Ivan Galamian, and chamber music with the Juilliard, Amadeus, Netherlands string quartets and Joseph Gingold. He has done recordings on Vox/Turnabout, Centaur, and with the Boston Chamber Music Society on Northeastern.

Immediately after completing the doctorate, Thompson joined the Oakwood College faculty as an assistant professor of music and director of the College Choir. He served for one year—1970-1971.

He is a former faculty member of the Juilliard School Pre-College Divisions, Wesleyan University, and Mount Holyoke College. Currently Dr. Thompson is a Robert R. Taylor Professor of Music and a Margaret McVicar Faculty Fellow at MIT where he is director of performance and chamber music studies.



Ye Shall Have A Song

By Marcus Thompson, D.M.A.

Director of Performance and Chamber Music Studies

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

In the spring of 1970, I was still a graduate student at The Juilliard School in New York City. That was to be a year filled with dramatic and transforming events in my life, and in the lives of many other students on college campuses throughout the nation. On May 4, my 24th birthday, and just a few weeks before I was to receive the doctorate degree from The Juilliard School at Lincoln Center, four students were shot to death by National Guardsmen on the campus of Kent State University in Ohio. Soon after, most major colleges and universities were forced to close or suspend classes, examinations, and graduations because of nationwide protests of the war in Viet Nam.

THE OAKWOOD INVITATION

In the summer of 1970, just a few weeks before classes were to begin, I was contacted by the administration and invited to Oakwood College to become Assistant Professor of Music and the new director of the Oakwood College Choir. I accepted that privilege and challenge knowing that I was fresh out of school, with little professional teaching experience.

Like so many freshmen on campus that year, I arrived for my first year at Oakwood with most of my earthly possessions, but without any idea where I would live or eat, as a faculty member, or how I would get around Huntsville without knowing how to drive. I seemed to have been sustained by a faith that would not shrink; a faith of assurance that the music tradition of excellence would be continued. We would have a song.

MY JOB ASSIGNMENTS

I was quickly told of my formidable choir duties, which lay well beyond teaching several courses in the department. These were to include preparing an anthem, meditation, and prayer responses for the weekly Sabbath service; preparing excerpts from the *Messiah* for its traditional annual production with orchestra in early December; planning and executing a spring tour, and producing a spring concert with entirely different music.

SUPPORT PERSONS

That *all* of this took place, and can still be fondly remembered as a spiritual, artistic, and educational highlight of my life, is a great tribute to the quality and support of individuals both inside and outside the Oakwood College Choir without whom this director would have been lost. Among those colleagues who gave invaluable personal and professional assistance were: Mrs. Inez Booth, Music Department

Chair; Professor and Mrs. Michael Harris; Professor and Mrs. Earl Gooding; and Henrietta Emmanuel.

Among the students: Sharon Bradford and Frances Skipper were both helpful as secretaries, and excellent company every day. By the time of our national tour, their ranks included Stanley Mims, Lee Davison, and Willie Taylor. Special gratitude goes to Waldo McMillan and Stanley Mims who taught this director to drive in their own cars at great personal risk. Among friends from the Huntsville community were: Dr. & Mrs. Henry C. Bradford of Alabama A & M University.

THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

On my arrival, I found a group of nearly 70 talented young singers. They represented the combined College Choir/Aeolians of my predecessor. I did not find it necessary to change that arrangement. Instead, I continued the group as one under the existing title of The College Choir.

Throughout the academic year 1970-71 the College Choir was the only choral ensemble officially sponsored by the Music Department. As such, it was responsible for singing anthem, meditation, and prayer responses at most weekly Sabbath morning worship services. Most of these services began with the singing of *Let Thy Holy Spirit Come Upon Us We Pray Thee* by the Russian composer Pavel Tchesnokov. It soon became a great favorite of the choir which enjoyed the rich, unaccompanied, antiphonal sonorities of music for double choir. Most anthems were unaccompanied, with the notable exceptions of two gospel selections: *Teach Us to Pray*, sung for the Week of Prayer, and later in the year, *The Old Ship of Zion*, with Rhonda Green, soprano soloist, and Ronald Campbell at the piano. These were the first pieces of gospel music ever to be performed by the College Choir.

For a choir whose repertoire was to span the range of Christian choral music, including works for Russian Cathedral, Austrian monastery, English university chapel, American Synagogue, German concert hall, and American inner-city storefront, it was an effort which did not go unnoticed. I will never forget how the choir sang for meditation one Sabbath an old Adventist hymn which was my parents' favorite—*Sweet Will of God*.

LYCEUM SERIES

• *Messiah* Excerpts

At home in Huntsville, there were also concerts on the Lyceum Concert Series. The most notable was a performance on December 3, 1970, in Ashby Auditorium of most of Handel's *Messiah* with three wonderful student soloists: Rhonda Green, soprano; Bessie Ratliff, mezzo-soprano; and Willie Taylor, tenor. Albert Lane, a local professional singer, was baritone soloist. We were joined by the Huntsville Civic Symphony, with Michael Harris as concertmaster, and two special keyboard musicians—Helen Katz (harpsichord) and Lonieta Thompson (organ) from New York City. The choir consisted of:

Sopranos

Armstrong, Myra
Bradford, Sharon
Cobb, Pamela
Davis, Annette
Dobbins, Sandra
Gilbert, Gladys
Gooding, Lela
Hightower, Ernestine
Jenkins, Cynthia
Lowery, Rise
Middleton, Sylvia
Mitchell, Delores
Pellman, Mary
Robinson, Regina
Underwood, Cynthia
VanPutten, Lolita



Altos

Alexander, Everyl
Black, Gloria
Brown, L'Tanya
Cordell, Sandra
Dobbins, Jackie
Earl, Beverly
Galloway, Stephanie
Ingraham, Udora
Jenkins, Beverly
Johnson, Bonita
Laurence, Kerri
Lee, Brenda
Outlaw, Sharon
Ratliff, Eleanor
Skipper, Frances
Smith, Dianna
Smith, Marcia
Stuart, Kenlyn
Ward, Rosalyn
Williams, Sandra
Woodfork, Kathy

Tenors

Boyce, Steven
Campbell, Ronald
Cobb, Garland
Davis, Leon
Davison, Lee
Emmanuel, Henrietta
Ford, Gerald
Hill, Charles
Hudson, John
Lang, Ronald
Mims, Stanley
Savage, Gregory
Tucker, Leonard
Watson, Michael
Williams, Cleveland

Basses

Cox, James
Davis, Ronald
Jones, Daniel
Lyons, Ed
Matthews, J. Lewis
McMillan, Waldo
Perry, Olson
Powell, Joe
Robinson, Harrell
Seard, Thomas
Singleton, Melvin
Smith, Barry
West Jesse
Wilson, Alonzo
Wright, Herman

- **Lyceum Series—Spring Concert**

The last concert appearance of the academic year was also held on the Lyceum Concert Series in Ashby Auditorium on May 23, 1971, with a greatly reduced choir of the most stalwart from the list above. We opened by performing all the works from Section I of the tour program (listed below), followed by Franz Schubert's Mass in G Major with members of the Huntsville Civic Symphony augmented by professional friends from Nashville, Tennessee. The program concluded with a complete *a capella* performance of Randall Thompson's *The Peaceable Kingdom*.

THE COLLEGE CHOIR ON THE ROAD

- **Festival of Choirs in Birmingham**

Our first road trip was in mid-fall, to a large gathering in Birmingham of choirs of all the Black colleges from the State of Alabama. We performed two spirituals on that program and joined all the choirs in the singing of the well-known gospel music and arrangements by Edwin Hawkins.

- **National Tour, Spring 1971**

Undoubtedly, the greatest singular achievement of this College Choir was its mastery and performance of a massive, unaccompanied program for its national tour in March 1971. Entitled "Ye Shall Have a Song," the program was designed to be a subtle blend of service and concert, in four parts, beginning and ending with choral prayers. It was a program intended to speak as a whole; telling the story of salvation through some of the most beautiful words and music ever written. For the choir, this meant months of extra rehearsals while learning notes, styles of singing, new languages, and gaining an increasing knowledge of the sacred observances of many other Christian traditions.

Michael Harris served as tour organizer, chaperone, and narrator of scriptural passages which introduced each of the four sections.



Mr. Michael Harris,
instructor in violin,
served as tour manager
and narrator.



Dr. Marcus Thompson congratulated for his magnificent viola performance in a concert at Oakwood.

YE SHALL HAVE A SONG

-Program-

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Edward C. Bairstow

I

O Admirable Commercium

Jacob Handl (Gallus)

Ave Maria

Anton Bruckner

Virga Jesse

Floruit Anton Bruckner

Christus Factus Est

Anton Bruckner

II

Blessed is the Man

Arr. Peter J. Wilhousky

Willie Taylor, Cantor

Howl Ye (From The Peaceable Kingdom)

Randall Thompson

When We Do Suffer Grief and Woe

Johannes Brahms

A Litany

William Walton

Create in Me, O God, a Pure Heart

Johannes Brahms

Ye Shall Have a Song (From The Peaceable Kingdom)

Randall Thompson

Give Thanks Unto the Lord

Robert Starer

III

I Hear a Voice A-Prayin'

Houston Bright

Sinner, Please Don't Let This Harvest Pass

Arr. J. Harold Montague

David Payne, Tenor

I'll Never Turn Back No Mo'

Arr. Hall Johnson

Any How

Arr. Evelyn La Rue Pittman

If I Got My Ticket, Can I Ride?

Arr. Marcus Thompson

Willie Taylor, Tenor

Rhonda Green, Obligato

IV

My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land

Sir Edward Elgar

My Spirit Sang All Day

Gerald Finzi

They That Put Their Trust in the Lord

Robin Orr

TRAVEL SCHEDULE

- Washington, DC.
First Church, Dupont Park Church
- New York, New York
Adventist Community at Columbia University;
St. Paul's Chapel
- South Lancaster, Massachusetts
Atlantic Union College
- Boston, Massachusetts
Berea Church
- Stoneham, Massachusetts
New England Memorial Church
- Toronto, Canada
Willowdale Church
- Detroit, Michigan
City Temple
- Cleveland, Ohio
Glendale Church
- Cincinnati, Ohio
Shiloh Church

REFLECTIONS

Now, in 1999, with the gift of nearly 30 years of hindsight, it seems to me that surely one of the greatest achievements of the Oakwood College Choir of 1970-71 was to survive the coming of age of a young man who, in a matter of months, was transformed by his first job from fellow student into "Dr. Thompson" for a group of nearly 70 talented young singers at a time when "Question Authority!" was the watchword of young people across the nation. Still, it was a year of precious blessings for which I am truly grateful to God.



“The Voice of Melody”

The melody of praise is the atmosphere of heaven; and when heaven comes in touch with the earth, there is music and song—“thanksgiving, and the voice of melody” (Isaiah 51:3).

Above the new-created earth, as it lay, fair and unblemished, under the smile of God, “The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). So human hearts, in sympathy with heaven, have responded to God’s goodness in notes of praise. Many of the events of human history have been linked with song.

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OAKWOOD'S MUSICAL EMISSARIES



Alma M. Blackmon, M.A., D.Mus.
Director, 1973-1985



About the Director

Alma Montgomery Blackmon

Born July 25, 1921, in Washington, D.C., to her parents, James and Martha Montgomery, **Alma M. Blackmon** evidenced her musical ability at the age of five. Both of her parents were teachers, but when Martha's children were born, she elected to stay at home with them until their schooling was complete. So both Alma and her older sister, Margaret, grew up in a loving, nurturing environment in which good music was an important component.

Although Alma was reading music at age five, she did not obtain her first piano teacher until she was six. Her principal teachers of piano have been Cecil Cohen and Thomas Kerr of Howard University School of Music. She studied voice with Frederick Wilkerson and Paul Chandler Hume, Music Editor of the *Washington Post*. For twelve years she was accompanist and assistant conductor to Warner Lawson, Dean of Howard University School of Music, as he led the Washington Community Chorus. From Dean Lawson she learned her conducting techniques. She earned the Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees in Early Childhood Education, with a minor in English on both levels, from District of Columbia Teachers College which has now been absorbed into the University of the District of Columbia.

An examination of the professional biography of Alma Blackmon reveals a diversity of academic preparation and a diversity of service within a single life. She prepared herself in three disciplines: Early Childhood Education, English, and Music, and she has worked in all of these areas. Being fascinated with the teaching-learning process, she became an educator. In her forty-two years of teaching, she has given classroom instruction to a diversity of learners. Her students range from kindergarteners and elementary school children in the public schools of the nation's capital, through undergraduate students at Howard University, graduate students at the University of the District of Columbia and Bowie State College in Maryland, all the way to teachers themselves in the in-service programs of the public schools.

Her service in the Seventh-day Adventist Church can best be described as a meshing of layman's activities with the professional contributions she has made. Hers has been a lifetime of service to the church, for at the age of ten she became organist of First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Washington, D.C., a position she held throughout her school years. When her parents transferred their membership to Ephesus Church (now Dupont Park Church), she affiliated with the music program of that church—singing in the choir, substituting at the organ, and finally becoming the director of the highly respected Dupont Park Choir. Because of the excellence of that choir, Alma Blackmon was appointed as Assistant Conductor to two famous

conductors for special events on the National Symphony Orchestra concert series: to Robert Shaw for the performance of *L'Enfrance Du Christ* by Hector Berlioz and to Dr. Howard Mitchell for the performance of Randall Thompson's *Testament of Freedom*. Mrs. Blackmon's musical abilities were recognized by the General Conference of SDA when she was asked to serve as Associate Choral Conductor for the General Conference sessions in Cleveland, Ohio, and Atlantic City, New Jersey.

After having served thirty years in the Washington, D.C., public schools and having been promoted to Supervisor of Early Childhood Education there, Mrs. Blackmon joined the faculty at Oakwood College where she served in two departments. In the English Department she taught Freshman Composition, and in the Music Department she taught courses in Music Theory, Humanities, Voice, Piano, and French, Italian, and German Diction. Upon her arrival at the college she was asked to assume the leadership of the Aeolians, a choral group which had served as Oakwood's concert choir in the past but which had been dormant for several years. She built the Aeolians into a greatly respected choral organization of international significance. During the twelve years of her active service, 1973-85, the Aeolians sang widely throughout 32 of 50 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, the Socialist Republic of Romania, England, Scotland, Wales, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and St. Thomas and St. Croix of the Virgin Islands.

Perhaps the greatest honor that came to Alma Blackmon during the Oakwood years was the acceptance of the Aeolians into the program of the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. Concerning their work in Romania, Harry Morgan, President of the Foundation, wrote: "The lasting impression made and friendships won by the Aeolians on their tour to Romania in 1981 are a genuine tribute to the long hours of hard work and sacrifice on the part of you and your students. Your journey of Friendship has made a real difference in the lives of those you met and the hearts you touched through your performances. You have taken the opportunity to help determine and shape the kind of world we all want . . . people knowing and understanding people, friend to friend."

Because of the impact of that tour of Romania, Mr. Morgan invited Alma Blackmon to travel to Moscow, Russia, in December 1981 as one of a group of 57 musicians and humanitarians where she participated in dialogue with Russian government officials and explored suggestions for concert exchanges between non-professional groups of the Soviet Union and the United States.

During the Oakwood years the General Conference assigned Mrs. Blackmon to responsibilities through which she had the opportunity to serve the world church: a five-year appointment to the General Conference Music Committee; appointments to serve as Associate Choral Conductor at the General Conference sessions in Dallas, Texas (1980), and New Orleans, Louisiana (1985); and a three-year term on the Review and Herald Hymnal Committee whose work resulted in the publication of *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* in 1985. Articles written by her have appeared in the *Sabbath School Worker* and *The Adventist Review*. Her last contribution at Oakwood College was a humanitarian one. In six weeks she led the faculty and student

body to raise \$10,000 for the digging of a well in Ethiopia for famine relief in that drought-ridden land.

Since her retirement from Oakwood College, Mrs. Blackmon has lived with her family in Memphis, Tennessee, where she served as Minister of Music at First Seventh-day Adventist Church. There she also established a well-equipped nursery school so that she could lay the foundation for the organized school experiences that her granddaughters, Kristen and Kandis, would later have. When her family moved to Atlanta, she became Minister of Music at Berean SDA Church and served for eight years in that capacity.

In June of 1988, Alma Blackmon was awarded the honorary degree, Doctor of Music, by Andrews University for her musical contributions to the world church of Seventh-day Adventists. She then accompanied Wintley Phipps to Sydney, Australia, where she served as Director of Music for his month-long evangelistic meetings which were sponsored by the Greater Sydney Conference during the month of August. In May 1990 she was awarded the honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, by Atlantic Union College in recognition of the international contributions she had made through the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation behind the then-existing Iron Curtain and other European countries.

Alma Blackmon now resides in Atlanta, Georgia, where her daughter, Brenda Wood, is the principal news anchor for WXIA-TV, the NBC affiliate, and where her son-in-law, Dr. Keith Wood, is a member of the Psychiatry Faculty of Emory University Medical School. She currently teaches Piano in her home studio and at Greater Atlanta Adventist Academy as well, and she recently became pianist for Buckhead Baptist Church in Atlanta.



Rehearsal, Oakwood College Church.

AEOLIANS . . .



Alma M. Blackmon
Director

Oakwood's Musical Emissaries

By Alma M. Blackmon, M.A., D. Mus.
Artist in Residence, Retired

To quote former President Calvin B. Rock: "Some schools have a basketball team; others send out a football team; but Oakwood has the Aeolians. It is upon this group of singers that the responsibility for public relations through student performance lies."

The Aeolians, musical emissaries for Oakwood College, were organized in 1946 by Dr. Eva B. Dykes who felt that the college needed a concert choir for public relations purposes. Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis was the first conductor to tour the nation with these able singers.

During these years I was not a member of the Oakwood College Community, but I was always involved in hosting the choirs from Oakwood College when they performed in my hometown, Washington, D.C. Therefore, I have hosted the Aeolians under the direction of Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis, the Oakwood College Choir under the direction of Dr. Marcus Thompson, and the Ars Nova directed by Dr. Jon Robertson who was my house guest on some of those occasions. At that time I had no dream of ever performing similar work for Oakwood College.

However, in 1973 I was employed at Oakwood College to teach English and had no personal plan to be affiliated with the Music Department. Yet on the second day of my arrival, Mr. Harold Anthony, then chairman of the Music Department, invited my daughter and me to dinner. During the dinner conversation he said, "I have been hoping that you would assist with some of the choral responsibilities here." I asked what the choral responsibilities were.

He replied, "There is the College Choir which sings for the church services; there is the Showcase, a small group of soloists who can fit into a station wagon and travel to nearby places to sing programs; and there are the Aeolians whose responsibility is to go on concert tours for public relations purposes. Mrs. Pierre-Louis used to conduct the Aeolians, but they have been dormant since she left for Pacific Union College. Could you help with any of these?"

I chose the College Choir, but Mr. Anthony said, "Oh, I'm disappointed. I would prefer that your 'brand' of music go on the road."

I explained that I chose the College Choir because I had just, the year before, in 1972, undergone radical cancer surgery, and I was not certain that I could endure lengthy travel on a bus. Mr. Anthony assured me that the tour would last only 10 days in the spring, and he hoped that I would reconsider.

I did, and I left that dinner with the responsibility to revive the Aeolians as a separate chorale to fulfill its original purpose as expressed by its founder, my fellow Washingtonian, Dr. Eva B. Dykes.

When school opened, I initiated a recruitment procedure by posting announcements throughout the campus of the formation of a new choral group, the Aeolians.

The students, upon coming to the auditions, filled out an application. I also recorded the solos they were required to sing so that I could compare the applications and the recordings as I made my decisions later. The auditions also included sightreading, tests for the ability to repeat intervals sung to the applicant, and the identification of each singer's vocal range.

It is significant that my first group of Aeolians was largely a freshman group. Very few upperclassmen came to the Aeolian auditions. They remained with the College Choir that had been touring for Oakwood in the recent past. Some of the upperclassmen who did come are significant in their musical identity: Michele Cleveland, Deadra Johnson, Cynthia McCall, William Dykes, Wintley Phipps, Claude Shaw, Donald Shelton, and Corliss Claibon, our first magnificent accompanist. I shall always be grateful that these upperclassmen cast their lot with us, because they brought a level of maturity as well as outstanding musicianship to the revival of the Aeolians.

At that time the enrollment at Oakwood was in the 800's, and it was the goal of President Rock to build a student body of 1,000. To achieve this end, he would meet with the Public Relations Director, the Chairman of the Music Department, and the Director of the Aeolians, and, with a large map, he would point out the sections of the country from which we received too few students. It was to those places that the Aeolians were originally sent, and the goal of 1,000 students plus was realized within two years of our concertizing.

Since then the Aeolians have traveled far and wide with their inspirational singing. From 1973 to 1985 the more than 230 concerts which they performed with me succeeded in recruiting students from coast to coast in the United States and from Canada, Bermuda, the Virgin Islands, and the Bahamas.

Their greatest achievement was passing the audition that qualified them to become Friendship Ambassadors for America. Through their beautiful singing and winning personalities, they established friendships for our country among the peoples of Romania, England, Scotland, and Wales. Although they were not present at Atlantic Union College when I was awarded an honorary doctorate for this international work, they were cited at that occasion by Thomas Pickering, then Ambassador to the United Nations from the United States, when he said, "It is the international contribution of Alma Blackmon, her singers, and others like them that makes my work at the United Nations more possible."

During my second year at Oakwood, 1974-75, certain changes came about in my life. Dr. Emerson Cooper, Academic Dean, invited me to join the music faculty full time and assigned me to the College Choir as well. I insisted that the Aeolians become the nucleus of the larger 100-voice College Choir, because I thought it unwise to sponsor a group of elitist singers who reaped the benefits of travel and glamorous assignments while others whom I had been assigned to conduct stayed at home and served.

So the Aeolians rehearsed on Mondays and Thursdays while the College Choir rehearsed on Tuesdays and Fridays. Aeolians had one-hour sectional rehearsals on Sundays so that we were together on a daily basis. This probably accounts for the fact

that deep friendships were formed between us that last until this day.

The Aeolians who performed for Oakwood College during the years 1973-1985 have managed to stay in contact since graduating. In 1991 they met in Atlanta, organized an alumni chapter, and established a scholarship program in order that they could continue to serve their alma mater both musically, when called upon, and financially.

MAJOR PLACES VISITED

A complete list of cities appears here because we considered every engagement to be a major event. An asterisk indicates cities in which more than one appearance was made.

Akron, OH	Fresno, CA	Orlando, FL*
Angwin, CA	Gary, IN	Philadelphia, PA*
Atlanta, GA*	Glendale, CA*	Piatra Neamt, Romania
Bacau, Romania	Greensboro, NC*	Pittsburgh, PA
Bakersfield, CA	Hamilton, Bermuda*	Pleasant Hill, CA
Baltimore, MD	Hartford, CT	Portland, OR*
Baton Rouge, LA	Houston, TX	Pulaski, TN*
Berkshire, England	Huntsville, AL*	Redding, CA
Berrien Springs, MI*	Iasi, Romania	Richmond, VA
Birmingham, AL*	Indianapolis, IN	Riverside, CA*
Birmingham, England	Jackson, MS*	Rochester, NY
Boston, MA	Kansas City, KS	Sacramento, CA
Boulder, CO	Kansas City, MO	Salem, OR
Bracknell, England	Knoxville, TN	Salt Lake City, UT*
Brasov, Romania	Lodi, CA*	San Diego, CA
Brooklyn, NY*	Loma Linda, CA*	San Francisco, CA*
Bucharest, Romania*	London, England*	Savannah, GA
Caldwell, ID	Los Angeles, CA*	Seattle, WA*
Canterbury, England	Louisville, KY*	Southampton, Bermuda
Charlotte, NC	Memphis, TN*	St. Croix, Virgin Islands
Chester, England*	Miami, FL*	St. John, Virgin Islands
Chicago, IL*	Milwaukee, WI	St. Louis, MO*
Cincinnati, OH	Modesto, CA	St. Petersburg, FL
Cleveland, OH	Montgomery, AL*	St. Thomas, Virgin Islands*
Clovis, CA	Mountain View, CA	Stockton, CA
College Place, WA	Mt. Vernon, CA	Takoma Park, MD
Collegedale, TN*	Napa, CA	Teanec, NJ
Columbus, GA	Nashville, TN*	Toronto, Canada*
Columbus, OH*	Nassau, Bahamas*	Tulsa, OK*
Dallas, TX*	National City, CA	Tuscaloosa, AL
Dayton, OH	New Orleans, LA*	Tuskegee, AL*
Denver, CO	New York, NY*	Walla Walla, WA
Detroit, MI*	Newark, NJ	Washington, DC*
Edinburgh, Scotland	Oakland, CA*	Winston-Salem, NC
Eforie Nord, Romania	Ogden, UT	Yakima, WA
Flint, MI	Omaha, NE	

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

- **Honor America Day**

The Aeolians' first community event in Huntsville took place on February 18, 1974, on HONOR AMERICA DAY at Big Spring International Park. President Richard Nixon was the speaker. Each institution of higher learning was given a responsibility. "Hail to the Chief" was played by the Alabama A & M University Band; the University of Alabama choir sang American folk songs; the Aeolians sang Negro spirituals with emphasis on our signature song, *Oh, Freedom!*

- **The Embassy of Sierra Leone**

In the spring of 1974, the Aeolians conducted their first concert tour, arranged by Public Relations Director Victor Brooks, of eleven major cities in the Northeastern and Midwestern states. In Washington, D.C., they sang a concert at the Embassy of Sierra Leone at the invitation of His Excellency Ambassador Peale of Liberia before an audience of African and Caribbean diplomats. The music was so enthusiastically received that an invitation was issued to the Aeolians to tour several West African countries. The tour, however, was not realized because of financial and political reasons.

- **Alabama Center for Higher Education**

ACHE was a consortium of black colleges and universities in the state of Alabama. No other state could boast of such an organization in which all of the academic departments of the schools were involved in cooperative ventures. Every February ACHE presented the choirs of these institutions in a Negro Spiritual Festival, and from year to year each school was given the opportunity to be the host school.

The program format required each college choir to perform two spirituals and, at the end, to combine with all the other choirs under the baton of a noted conductor. So it was that the Aeolians were afforded the privilege of being directed by the eminent William Dawson of Tuskegee University, Dr. Wendell Whalum of Morehouse College, Dr. Aldrich Adkins of Southern University, Betty Jackson, composer and arranger of Negro spirituals, and others. When the festival was held at Tuskegee University two years before my retirement, the planning committee issued the invitation to me to serve as guest conductor.

Several Oakwood faculty and staff members would accompany us to these events, and the Oakwood College Aeolians were always enthusiastically received with standing ovations, wild applause, and shouts of praise.

- **Jet Magazine at Chicago Concert**

After hearing the Aeolians at their first Chicago concert, *Jet Magazine* reporter Clarence Brown wrote:

PEOPLE ARE TALKING ABOUT the Aeolians, that versatile Black Choral group from Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala., who took Chicagoans by storm at a sacred concert in which they sang any and everything from Bach to Edwin Hawkins. The highly acclaimed 60-voice choir is under the direction of the accomplished pianist and singer, Mrs. Alma Blackmon, who was once the vocal trainer for Grammy Award winner Roberta Flack.

(That is what he wrote, yet the choir did not sing Edwin Hawkins, but "Walk Him Up the Stairs" from PURLIE VICTORIOUS, and Alma Blackmon taught Roberta Flack piano, not voice.)

• First West Coast Tour

In the winter of 1974, the Aeolians made a tour of the Northwestern states and California. Arranged by Public Relations Director Harold Lee, they rendered 31 con-



certs in a five-week period. While in Los Angeles, they made a series of telecasts for BREATH OF LIFE, and at the request of Walter Arties, they also recorded Negro spirituals that were included on Breath of Life's first LP recording. Walter Arties asked us to wear dashikis for the telecast so that we would be colorful. After this,



whenever we sang Negro spirituals in concert, dashikis became our standard dress.

• Joint Concerts with University of Alabama Wind Ensemble

In the spring of 1977, the Aeolians were invited by Dr. George Cavanagh, conductor of UAH Wind Ensemble, to perform a joint concert with him at the Von Braun Center for the Performing Arts. This was a most historical occasion, because the UAH campus is a satellite school to the very University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa at whose doors former Governor George Wallace once stood to prevent the enrollment of black students. In view of that fact, the appearance of an all-white wind ensemble, surrounded by a totally black choir, made an unforgettable sight. The uniqueness of this collaboration drew a packed house, and one *Huntsville Times* reporter wrote that Huntsville would never be the same again.

Dr. Cavanagh invited the Aeolians to appear with him a second year, 1978. This time he programmed me as the narrator for Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait*. Both concerts were recorded by PBS for television viewing and were shown several times. Soon this letter was received by the Music Department from Mark Russakoff, M.M., Certifie, Conservatoire Regional de la ville de Strasbourg:

I saw and heard the presentation on WBIQ-Birmingham last evening of the Aeolians of Oakwood College and the UAH Concert Band. I was absolutely overcome both by the dynamic and elegant conducting you manifested and by the sound of the choir. I have rarely heard diction so crystal-clear, intonation as accurate, nor choral ensemble so well blended. I can honestly say that in my experience in the study of music, both in this country and in France, I have heard few choirs and witnessed few conductors whose results are as exciting or as elegant as Oakwood's.

• United Negro College Fund Affiliation

The Aeolians performed twice for UNCF banquets during my tenure. After our singing at the first of these in Birmingham, President & CEO William H. Gray complimented us as the finest choir among the UNCF schools.

Three circumstances converged to bring about our second UNCF appearance. Former Aeolian Benjamin Germany engaged us to perform a concert in St. Louis, Missouri. At the same time, the St. Louis chapter of UNCF was hosting its annual banquet. Simultaneously, Washington Medical School was considering the application of Aeolian tenor, Carlton Sampson, to the medical school, and Carlton had listed Aeolians as one of the cultural activities he had pursued in college. So one of the physicians on the entrance committee telephoned Carlton at his dormitory to solicit the Aeolians' appearance at the banquet. The hour of the banquet conflicted with the hour of the concert, but the St. Louis chapter wanted us so greatly that they changed the banquet to an earlier hour so that we could sing for them and then be transported to the church. Their patrons cooperated wholeheartedly with this change as evidenced by the packed banquet hall upon our arrival.

- **General Conference, 1980—Dallas, Texas**

In addition to our participation in the mass choir at General Conference, the Aeolians fulfilled two additional specific assignments. The first was to close the North American Division report with the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. There followed a five-minute standing ovation by the delegates. After the benediction, the Polish delegation rushed forward shouting, “Come to Poland! Ask Dr. Rittenhouse; she will tell you how to do it! Come to Poland!”

The second important assignment was to join with the Kingsway College Choir to sing *The Three Angels*, a newly-composed oratorio which the General Conference had commissioned Dr. Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse to write. Accompanied by the New England Ensemble and conducted by Dr. James Bingham, this performance closed the General Conference session.

When all was over, this letter was received from Elder John Hancock, Chairman of the General Conference Music Committee:

Words cannot adequately express my appreciation to you for the tremendous music your Aeolians gave during their presentation at the General Conference. Without question they were the stars of the show, only I don't want to express it that way since their presentations were deeply spiritual. I was proud of them and praised God for their witness in music. My love goes to each of your students for their part in this wonderful musical feast.

- **The Aeolian Concert Tour of Romania in 1981**

In response to the call, “Come to Poland,” we consulted with Dr. Rittenhouse who introduced us to the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation in New York City. In



order to be accepted, a choral group was required to submit a taped audition along with their application. It was also necessary to be recommended by an artist who had already been sponsored by Friendship Ambassadors. That person was Dr. Rittenhouse. After a few weeks of waiting, this letter was received from Harry W. Morgan, President, Friendship Ambassadors Foundation:

As founder and president of the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, it gives me the deepest personal and professional pleasure to inform you that the Board of Directors has voted to accept the Aeolians as one of the highly select ensembles that will travel and give concerts under our auspices. Our standards of acceptance are rigorous in terms of accepting only those groups who exemplify the finest qualities of artistic caliber and personal character. We are entirely confident that you and your ensemble will represent the United States and the American people superbly. Therefore, we are particularly happy to welcome you and the Aeolians as new members of this unique international family.

The underlying philosophy of this tour was that more friendships can be made oftentimes through music than through diplomacy. The slogan of Friendship Ambassadors Foundation is: **Friendship is the Message; Music is the Medium.**

As the Aeolians began the huge undertaking of raising the required funds for this trip, such unrest broke out in Poland that we feared for the safety of our students. Thus, in spite of the urgent cry, "Come to Poland," we requested another destination and were rerouted to **Romania**.

Accompanied by **Dr. Rosa Banks** and **Dean Lance Shand**, the Aeolians flew to Romania on June 10, 1981. We went under certain restrictions, for Friendship Ambassadors feared that, if we did anything in connection with an organized religion, their entire program might be thrown out of Romania. Therefore, we were ordered not to contact the Seventh-day Adventists while there. Since we were there when communism was at its height, we were required to:

1. Send the lyrics of every song we planned to sing so that the Romanian authorities could see if the words were in accordance with Romanian law;
2. Refrain from singing any sacred music in concert (How fortunate for us that the Negro spiritual was regarded as folk music—not as sacred.);
3. Refrain from photographing airport scenes, bridges, policemen, soldiers at work, or military installations lest such pictures interfere with Romanian security.

We arrived in Bucharest on a Friday, and although we had instructed Friendship Ambassadors about our Sabbath observance, we found ourselves booked for a concert that very night. If the concert could have been all sacred, we could have sung. However, Friendship Ambassadors required American folk music and show tunes so that the culture of our country could be presented. I, therefore, canceled our very first performance.

However, as sunset approached, a large group of my students found me and



Above: Boating on the Beautiful Blue Danube with Friendship Ambassador Dick Mayo and Guide Felicia.

Below: I am with Russian officials Nikolas and Boris in Moscow (1980) after conference on Concert Exchanges.



asked what I planned to do about worship. Fearing that our hotel rooms were bugged, we were afraid to worship in them. We were in Romania during the rule of Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian despot who had placed stricter-than-ever controls upon the lives of his people. I suggested that we go to a park and have worship outside. When we arrived at the park, it seemed that all Bucharest was there. The Romanian people apparently walk and smoke for their recreation.

So we found a huge building, concealed ourselves behind its massive pillars, and began to sing *Don't Forget the Sabbath* in hushed tones. The students requested hymn after hymn, and, although we were whispering, a crowd gathered at the foot of the steps. Behind the crowd, which grew to be about ten rows thick, we saw two bayonets emerge as soldiers patrolled the park with their weapons pointed toward the sky. They went past but returned, and then the bayonets stopped. I began to pray to God for the protection of my students. This was frightening, because, without intending to do so, we were breaking the law. In Romania, in those days, it was the law that no more than three people could assemble without having previously applied for the written permission of the state. When the bayonets moved away, I was so relieved. We soon came down the stairs of that building and moved through layers of appreciative Romanians in order to make our way back to the hotel.

During the scheduled concerts, the Aeolians learned that Romanians express appreciation in ways that differ from ours. They bring flowers to concerts, and at any moment of high appreciation they enter the stage and present flowers to the soloists and conductor in particular. A person may even pass down the entire row of sopranos, placing long-stemmed flowers in their hands and kissing them as they go along. The greatest tribute of love was to remove one's scarf from the neck and place it around the neck of one of the singers.

Friendship Ambassadors encourages its singers to render impromptu concerts as well as scheduled ones. So the Aeolians have sung in parks, on the streets, in hotel lobbies, outside concert halls to satisfy the people who had curiously followed us through the streets, and in airports at the gates of our airplanes before departure.

We learned about the inconveniences of life under communism: the poverty, the paucity of food, the ownership of all businesses by the state, the secrecy, and the suspicion. As guests in Romania, we never knew the name of our hotel until an half hour before we arrived at it. We never saw a menu nor knew what we were going to eat until it was set before us.

Romanians do not understand food. Would you like to eat these dishes?

1. Mamaliga—yellow corn meal mush;
2. Cream of mushroom soup followed by an entree of creamed mushrooms;
3. Stuffed cabbage on shredded cabbage;
4. Cottage cheese in a dish of buttermilk;
5. Squares of cake topped with whipped cream only to discover that the cake is wet.

So we all lost weight until we discovered the dollar shops, stores that accepted



Above: Aeolians pose in Romania
Below: Expectant audience



With Lance Shand
and Rosa Banks



ONLY the American dollar. They sold chocolate candy bars and cookies. So we bought those in abundance. Then we all gained weight.

Furthermore, we were shut off from all information. We had no idea of events that were happening in the world or the United States, and we could not understand the Romanian newscasters. Lack of information can be intimidating.

However, all was not work and sacrifice. There was our visit to the Romanian National Opera House, and there was the day of gathering seashells on the shores of the Black Sea. We hiked among the gigantic gorges of the Carpathian Mountains and boated on the Danube River photographing the animals that live in the wild life preserves along the shores. Moreover, we toured Dracula's Castle with its mysterious staircases and narrow hallways in Transylvania. Barter is the way of life in Romania, and we participated in this exchange. The Romanian people were eager to trade with us their expertly hand-crafted chess sets and the like for anything from America, particularly jeans with holes in the knees.

As we rode our Romanian tour bus from place to place, we observed that the Romanian way of life seemed to require that the backs of women should be bent in toil. We saw women stooping down in the fields raising crops, women cultivating plants in parks, women walking down rural roads with farm implements across their backs, and women riding in open trucks at the end of the work day. In our hotels women swept the floors with brooms whose handles were so short that the women had to bend over in order to sweep. They used no mops to clean the lobby but scrubbed the floors on their knees. We never saw men at work. Upon inquiry, however, we learned that the men were working also, but in factories. Life was dismal there.

This journey of friendship between democracy and communism was summed up by a group of Romanian children who sang these words to us so movingly that we wept. It seemed as if they and their teachers were attempting to send a message through us to the outside world.

And when you climb into your bed tonight,
And when you go and close the door,
Just think of us out in the cold and dark
'Cause there's not enough love to go 'round.

And half the world hates the other half,
And half the world has all the food,
And half the world lets others fight and starve,
'Cause there's not enough love to go 'round.

And sympathy is what we need, my friend,
And sympathy is what we need.
And sympathy is what we need, my friend,
'Cause there's not enough love to go 'round.
No, there's not enough love to go 'round.

As we rode to our plane far out on the airfield in an airport conveyance, some Aeolians at the far end of the vehicle paid a respectful salute to Romania as they began her national anthem:

Trei culori cunosc pe lume
Amintind de 'un brav popor;
Cei viteaz con vecchi renume
In luptar triumfator.
Cei viteaz con vecchi renume
In luptar triumfator.

Everyone listened intently. I observed faint smiles and surprised expressions on the faces of the Romanian airport employees. They seemed to wonder how these Black people could possibly know their national anthem. During our international travels, we have always begun our concerts with two anthems: first, the host country's and secondly, our own. So we had sung this Romanian one many times.

A few hours later, over the Atlantic Ocean, a flight attendant approached Dean Shand and asked if his group could sing for the crew. So it was that, on the 24th of June, we sang the final concert of our series 33,000 feet above the Atlantic Ocean to a captive audience of 145 additional passengers.

Our tour guide, Felicia Nigolescu, summarized our visit with these words:

I have been a tour guide for eight years, and in that period of time I have conducted tours for hundreds of groups. You, the Aeolians, have been the best group that I have ever had, and I do not flatter you. . . best in musical program, and best in behavior and attitude.

At the Kennedy Airport we were met by two Friendship Ambassadors representatives and cleared customs the instant they identified us as their people. Free at last we walked through the security gates into a mass of waiting people. Towering above the crowd was **Sam Anderson**, our bus driver, with his camera poised to photograph our arrival. Nobody ever looked as good to me as Sam and his assistant, **Lynn Simmons**, looked at that moment. They symbolized love, home, family, and democracy even, and to let them know how I felt, I smothered them with kisses! How generous it was of **Dr. Rock** to send our very own Diesel to New York to get us!

• Concert Tour of Bermuda

During Mrs. Juliaette Phillips' management of the Aeolians, she arranged a tour to the beautiful island of Bermuda. We performed three there—each of a different repertoire, to packed audiences. This was surprising to the people, some of whom did not come the second night. They explained that most visiting choirs would render the same concert each time. The news of our vast repertoire circulated throughout the island so that the third concert was even more crowded than the previous two had been. It also was more lengthy than the others, because the people pressed us with requests and would not let us go.



Marvelous hospitality was provided in the homes of the people, and rewarding sightseeing was arranged. Because **Dr. Roy Malcolm**, former principal of the Bermuda Institute, was traveling with us, he saw to it that all amenities extended to us were of a superior nature. Also, because we were there for a number of days, my students bonded with their hosts and hostesses in a wonderful way.

This was an exquisite concert tour which caused us to hunger for a return tour of duty. As a result of our work there, Mrs. Phillips produced a tape to be used for public relations purposes, *THE AEOLIANS IN BERMUDA*.

- **World's Fair in 1982**

The African-American Exhibit at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee.



Choir, World's Fair 1982

see, dedicated itself to the purpose of insuring that, amidst a global parade of peoples and cultures, the African-American should not be forgotten. The exhibit highlighted contributions African-Americans had made, not only in this country, but also in the worldwide community.

Denise McKenzie, an Oakwood alumna, was the manager of the African-American Exhibit and coordinator of African-American National Days at the fair, September 21 and 22. Our travels to Romania as Friendship Ambassadors for our country qualified us to appear at the Crowning Ceremony in joint concert with Aeolian alumnus **Wintley Phipps**. I am still awed by the fact that we experienced **Jayne Kennedy** and **Alex Haley** as our Mistress and Master of Ceremonies. The day's events had featured the **Honorable Andrew Young**, **Muhammed Ali**, the spectacular Florida A & M University Band and the Tennessee State University Band in parade, and a host of Black mayors and businessmen. School had just opened, the Aeolians had been reorganized at the start of the school year, and this invitation came which could not be refused. Extra rehearsals, of course, were the key to our preparedness. Oakwood College was well represented in the management of the occasion and in the musical offerings by Wintley Phipps and the Aeolians.

• Mormon Tabernacle Surprise in 1982

The Aeolians sang a second tour of the west coast under the aegis of **Elder Edwin White** of the North Pacific Union Conference. En route we arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, late at night and asked merely to be driven by the great Mormon Tabernacle. Surprised to find it open, we joined the other tourists who were thronging in. At this time **Dr. Robert Andrews** was our Public Relations Director, and, while we were touring the temple, there must have been a discussion about the identity of these blue-jacketed spectators. He must have told someone that we were a college choir on tour, because suddenly we found ourselves in the choir loft of the Mormon Tabernacle at the invitation of one of the church officials. Standing in front of those massive pipes of that world-famous organ, we sang Aeolian repertoire in that acoustically perfect temple. Tourists set up tripods to photograph this spectacle, because the Mormon Church, at that time, was known to have questions in their doctrine about the souls of Blacks. Our singing there was a wonder!

• Second European Tour to England, Scotland, and Wales in 1983

Thirty-nine Aeolians flew to **London** to sing their second tour as **Friendship Ambassadors**. They were accompanied by six employees of the college: Dr. Rosa Banks, Mr. Halsey Banks, Dr. Roy Malcolm, Mrs. Edrene Malcolm, Dean Lance Shand, and Mrs. Juliaette Phillips who, at that time, was Public Relations Director. Two Aeolian alumni went along: Harrison Watkins to accompany at the piano and Melcher Monk to sing bass. The tour lasted from June 9 through June 23, 1983.

The first concert was rendered at **New Gallery in London** to a wildly enthusiastic audience. Thunderous applause and screams followed every composition. Bass

soloist Rodney Ware was besieged by the young ladies as if he were a pop star. The sponsors had arranged for the concert to be recorded by the **British Broadcasting Company**.

Chester, England, was a city of great enjoyment: a well-received concert; the Roman roads dating from 312 B.C. when the Roman Empire was in power; the costumed Town Crier who rang his bell and declared the news of the day which included the fact that that very day was the birthday of Aeolian Tenor Mark Allen.



Town Crier



Dr. Eugene Scott exchanges hat with Crier;
Mrs. Phillips reads news of the day

On the day of our concert at **Canterbury Cathedral**, we arrived early to tour the structure. This huge Gothic cathedral begun in the 1000's and completed in 1503, was the site of the assassination of Archbishop Thomas a Beckett while he was at evening prayers. So it was that the Aeolians stood just a few yards from the altar where this tragedy had occurred and sang *The Peaceable Kingdom*, an oratorio written by the American composer Randall Thompson. How historic to be singing in the cathedral which inspired Chaucer to write the **CANTERBURY TALES**!

St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland, was the site for another rendition of *The Peaceable Kingdom*. St. Giles is so huge that the sound from the organ, as the keys are pressed, does not reach the ears of the parishioners until two or three seconds later. We marveled at the genius of the organist to be able to make this adjustment. On the other hand, he thought we were phenomenal, particularly in the bass section. He said that our basses made his basses sound like baritones.

This tour included not only the concerts arranged by Friendship Ambassadors, but it was expanded by **Elder and Mrs. Louis Preston** who scheduled several concerts for us at Adventist venues in **London and Birmingham**. Mrs. Janice Montgomery Preston, a piano student of mine in her childhood but at that time residing in England, rode the bus with us and explained the status of the Adventist work in England. She and her husband arranged for us to sing a Sabbath Vesper at **Newbold College** where a conference of British Adventist ministers was in session. Our return



Canterbury Cathedral



Alma with the organist at
St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, Scotland

to New Gallery was their idea also, and when we arrived there, we were met by the same adoring crowd and besieged with requests for songs that we had performed at the first concert. Friendship Ambassadors was again pleased with our work and gave us a party prior to our departure from England's shores.

Sightseeing, conducted by our guide, Lee, was rich in **England**. It included **Stonehenge**, that mysterious collection of prehistoric stones that has been proven to be in sync with the sun, and that was once the worship site of the Druids. We saw **The Tower of London** where the crown jewels are kept under the watchful eyes of those colorful guards, The Beefeaters; the changing of the guard at **Buckingham Palace** where the royal family resides; **Westminster Abbey**, the site of the royal coronations and also the burial place of so many great Britons; the **Houses of Parliament** with **Big Ben**, that clock whose sonorous tolling is famous throughout the world; **St. Paul's Cathedral** which had been designed by **Sir Christopher Wren**, famous architect; the home of **Sir Francis Drake**, the great English seaman who caused the Spanish Armada to flee; and so much more.



Stonehenge



Tour Guide—Lee



In Scotland we had visited Edinburgh Castle, the Royal Mile, Holyroodhouse Palace, and the Moffatt Woolen Mills where Dr. Roy Malcolm, who is of Scottish descent, was able to purchase the *tartan plaid* of the *Malcolm Clan*. Sightseeing in Wales consisted of roaming in the ruins of ancient castles and romping from ballroom to ballroom.

Upon leaving London, the British Broadcasting Company presented each of us with the tapes of the two concerts we had rendered at New Gallery.



The Guards

Gloria and Edrene
at the
Tower of London



• General Conference, 1985—New Orleans, Louisiana

The Aeolians were invited to sing in New Orleans at the General Conference session for which I had been voted as Associate Director of the Mass Choir. The



The Castles of Wales



Alma and Melcher Monk

Aeolians were the main choir, however, for the 11 o'clock service on the second Sabbath. Joined by some Aeolian alumni, they and the General Conference Orchestra performed *The Heavens are Telling* by Josef Haydn. That afternoon they, with the Mass Choir, sang the background music for the closing pageant.

The year 1985 was the year of my retirement from Oakwood College. Because I would not see these students again, on the day of their departure I went to the lobby of the hotel to bid them farewell. One of my tenors, **Mervyn Warren**, invited me to be seated. He then led the Aeolians in the singing of *God So Loved the World*. There followed appropriate tearful goodbyes, for this General Conference session was the last work that I was scheduled to do for Oakwood College..

FUND-RAISING INITIATIVES

- **Sales of Recordings**

It was my suggestion to President Rock that the Aeolians make a recording to be sold after their concerts. The recording, *Oh, Freedom!* was made in 1974 prior to the first Aeolian tour. It sold over 10,000 copies on that tour and was a great boost to the financial success of it. The sales of that album have now reached more than 12,000 copies.

Other Aeolian recordings have been made as indicated below:

1976	PRESTIGE 79-074	LIFT EV'RY VOICE (LP) Produced by Alabama Center for Higher Education
1977	MARK RECORDS WD-1399	TOGETHER IN CONCERT (LP) Recorded Live at the Von Braun Center Produced by Harold Lee
1978	MARK RECORDS WD-1539	TOGETHER AGAIN (LP) Recorded Live at the Von Braun Center Produced by Harold Lee
1983	SMALL WORLD RECORDINGS	THE AEOLIANS IN BERMUDA (TAPE) Recorded Live in Bermuda Produced by Juliaette Phillips



(1)



(2)



(3)



(4)

1. Edrene Malcolm, 2nd from left, meets in-laws in London.
2. Lance Shand and Eugene Scott at Hyde Park.
3. Rosa and Halsey Banks asleep on the bus.
4. and 5. Farewell party by Friendship Ambassadors.



1993	AEOLIAN RECORDINGS 001	THE BEST OF THE AEOLIANS (CD) Produced by William Allgood and Alma Blackmon
1994	AEOLIAN RECORDINGS 002	THE TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT (CD) Recorded Live at the Von Braun Center Produced by William Allgood and Alma Blackmon

• Direct Solicitation

For both European concert tours under the sponsorship of Friendship Ambassadors, each student was required to raise more than \$1,200 for expenses. **Wintley Phipps**, noted Aeolian alumnus, suggested the financial plan: That students would solicit their friends and relatives for donations and that the names of their donors would appear on the program of a concert he would sing as the culmination. We followed the Phipps plan before each tour and were successful in raising thousands of dollars: \$50,020 for the Romanian tour, \$34,720 of which increased the economy of the school through the Bush-Beca program of matching funds that resulted from alumni giving, and \$55,020 for the tour of the British Isles.

• Scholarship Purposes

The Aeolian Alumni Chapter has produced two compact discs for the purpose of awarding annual scholarships to the ranking senior in the Music Department at Oakwood. The first, **THE BEST OF THE AEOLIANS**, consists of taped performances of Aeolian concerts around the world throughout the twelve years that they sang as musical emissaries for the college.

The second compact disc, **TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT**, was recorded live at the Von Braun Center in 1994. Music scholarships of \$1,000 each have been awarded to Angelique Clay, Janine Jason, Wayne Bucknor, Reyna Carguill, LaKiesha Perkins, and Jason Ferdinand as the **Alma Montgomery Blackmon Music Scholarship**.

Alumni Dues. Although the Aeolians represented the college through musical performances, they majored in various academic disciplines. Therefore, in later years the Aeolian Alumni Chapter established a scholarship program for juniors with the highest averages in various departments of the school. This scholarship money has come from the payment of dues. We are confident that this program of Aeolian Alumni giving will continue into the next century.

ORCHESTRAS

We have sung with the:

New England Ensemble
General Conference Mass Orchestra
General Conference Mass Orchestra

Dr. Virginia-Gene Rittenhouse, Conductor
Dr. Orlo Gilbert, Conductor
Dr. Alma Blackmon, Conductor

New England Ensemble
UAH Wind Ensemble

Dr. James Bingham, Conductor
Dr. George Cavanagh, Conductor

INTERCOLLEGIATE ASSOCIATIONS

The Aeolians have been fortunate to perform throughout the Seventh-day Adventist educational system at Walla Walla College in Washington state; Pacific Union College and Loma Linda University in California; Andrews University in Michigan; Southern Adventist University in Tennessee; Columbia Union College in Maryland; and Newbold College in England. Moreover, invitations issued by **Dr. Frank Hale** resulted in repeated appearances at Ohio State University.

CONCLUSION

I conclude this chapter by acknowledging all those persons who contributed to the success I enjoyed as conductor of the Aeolians from 1973-1985.

I thank **Dr. Calvin B. Rock, President**, for his comprehensive supervision of our work, for his occasional visits to us while we were on tour, and for his acknowledgment of the value of our contribution to the growth of the college.

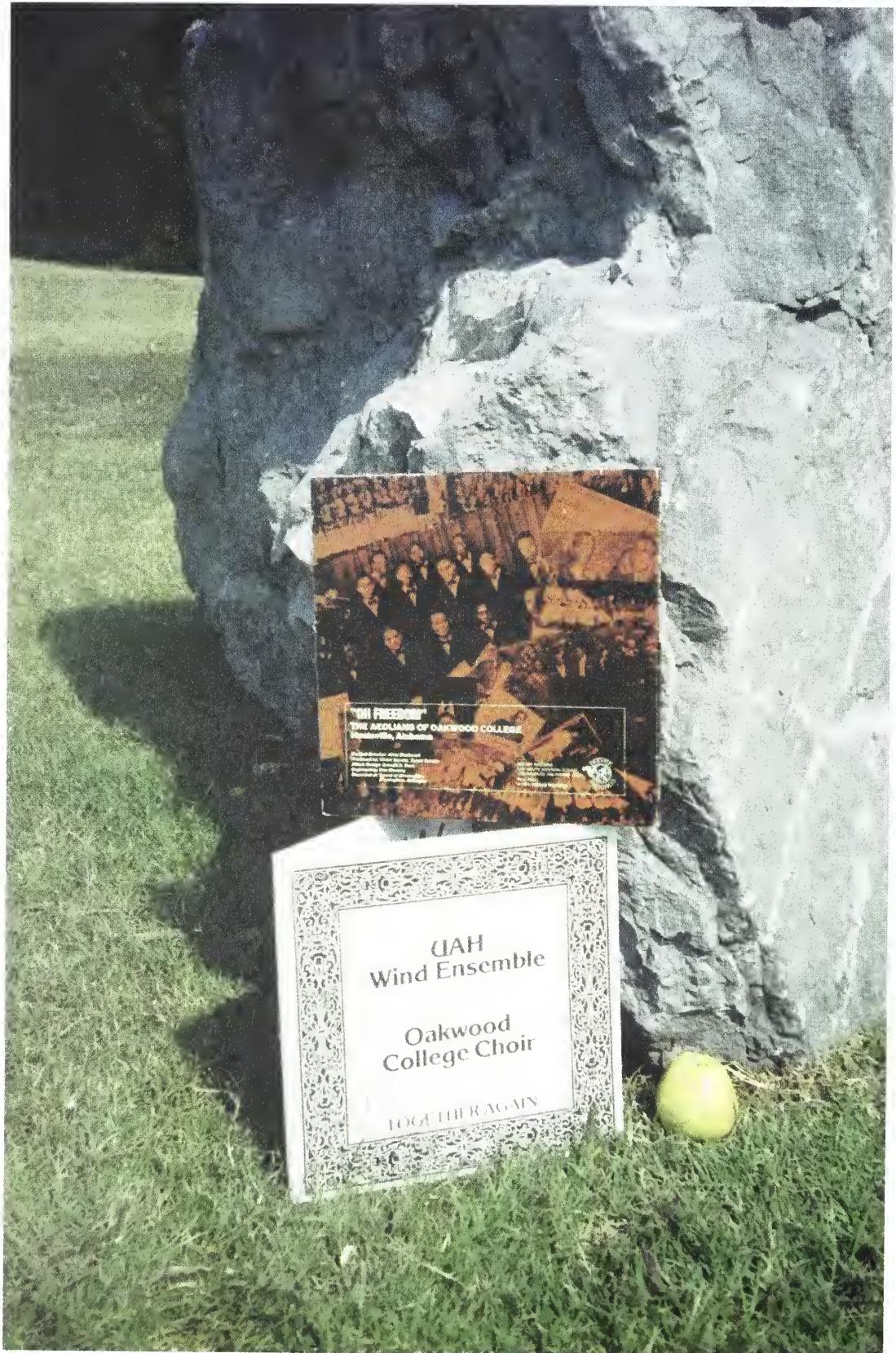
I recognize **Dr. Rosa T. Banks** under whose guidance we raised the funds for our European travels, for her accompanying us on our overseas jaunts, and for the testimonial banquets she planned for us before our European trips.

I acknowledge the work of the several Public Relations Directors who secured our engagements, made our travel arrangements, and spoke for the college at our concerts:

Elder Victor Brooks
Elder Harold Lee
Elder Kenneth Forde
Dr. Timothy McDonald

Dr. Robert Andrews
Mrs. Dorothy Holloway Smith
Mr. Dale Penn
Mrs. Juliaette Phillips





I thank the chairs of the Music Department for assigning the Aeolians to me and for encouraging me in this work: **Mr. Harold Anthony** and **Mrs. Inez Booth**.

I recognize the importance of the faculty stage directors who took care of the details of stage arrangement and concert deportment as we traveled: **Mrs. Zeola Allston** and **Dr. Keith Wood**.

I congratulate **Mrs. Hattie Mims** for her meticulous management of our several financial accounts. Our fund-raising was extensive, yet through the years not a penny was lost!

I salute each Aeolian singer for his/her musicianship, exemplary conduct, and diligence to the work of our choir, and I praise the Aeolian student accompanists who came to us with their pianistic abilities already well developed and accompanied us with skill and brilliance [alphabetically]: **Michael Andrews**, **Vanessa Blake**, **Corliss Claibon**, **Adora Green**, **Brian Jones**, **Mervyn Warren**, **Luther Washington**, and **Harrison Watkins**.

In retrospect I realize that I enjoyed a magnificent tour of duty with the Aeolians. I could not have done all of this work without God's blessing and the backing of the marvelous people listed above.

To each of you, you made these twelve years the most rewarding segment of my 42-year professional teaching career. To God Be The Glory!!!



Communion Through Song

Through song, David, amidst the vicissitudes of his changeful life, held communion with heaven. How sweetly are his experiences as a shepherd lad reflected in the words:

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters. . . .

Education, p. 164.



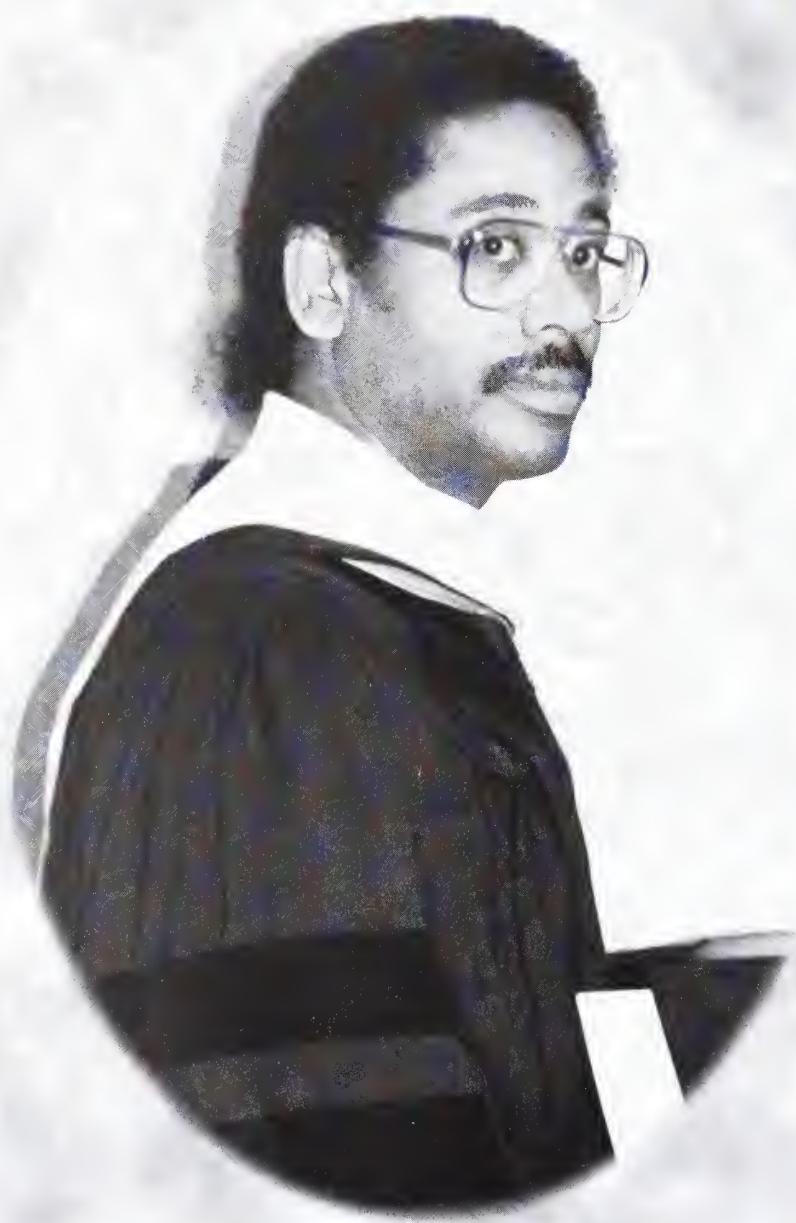
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AEOLIANS:

Call Central Casting



John Dennison, D.M.A.
Director, 1983-1987



About the Director

John T. Dennison

John T. Dennison was born in Brooklyn, NY, on February 14, a Valentine Baby, to Timothy and Modrey Dennison. He was the sixth of seven obviously musically talented children. When John was five, the family moved to Los Angeles, California.

John had no music lessons during his formative years. In the sixth grade in public school, he learned to play the trumpet as a member of the band. That experience ended the next year when he was sent to a private school that had no music program. Despite the lack of formal training, however, John's talent for singing and the ability to read music continued to exhibit itself. He was always in demand as a tenor for choirs, even adult ones, and was usually given the opportunity to perform solos.

When John was in the eighth grade, a significant event occurred—the music teacher at the school got married, and the school choir, John directing, sang at her wedding. From that point on, directing a choir was life itself.

Other important steps in his musical development included being the assistant director of the academy choir as an eleventh grader at Oakwood Academy, developing and conducting a personal choral ensemble called the **Metropoliers** at age sixteen, and a church youth choir in Los Angeles at eighteen. He was very successful, even though somewhat authoritarian and impatient. He could not understand why others, who had as little musical training as he, could not read music as he did.

As a freshman at Oakwood College, he was director of the Oakwood Academy choir. While that was certainly important, a development of even greater significance occurred. John had met a beautiful young lady with whom he attempted to establish a relationship—she resisted, he persisted. Preparing the choir to perform the *Seven Last Words of Christ* by Dubois, he could not decide whether to have the choir sing in English or Latin. Many college students and teachers, when asked a preference, immediately said no to Latin. When he asked the beautiful young lady he was trying to court, she said she would have to hear it in Latin in order to make an intelligent decision. John immediately, and correctly, it turned out, perceived her to be a person of depth and reflection. He decided then and there to sing the work in Latin, and determined to win her hand. Musical history was made, and that beautiful young lady is now **Mrs. Vivian A. Dennison**.

After serving a year in the position of Academy Choir director, as a sophomore, he formed and directed an Oakwood College Male Chorus. When the director

of the Aeolians, Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis, requested a maternity leave, he was asked to serve as interim director of that ensemble for the rest of the year.

During his junior year, he formed a male quartet, and in a contest, was one of two finalists. The other quartet sang a more contemporary kind of style and appealed to students, and it was widely assumed that they would be the winners. His quartet won, however, because John, knowing the judges were music professors, left no musical detail to chance.

Following his junior year at Oakwood, John attended Pacific Union College (PUC) where the choral conducting teacher said John was one of the best conducting students he had ever encountered.

John and Vivian had planned to marry and return to PUC. His father, however, pleaded with them to come to Los Angeles to help him with a music project, and they acceded to his request. John enrolled at Pepperdine University for a year, and was selected to be Pep Band conductor for the next school year. John was unable to return, however, because Vivian, who had been supporting John's pursuit of a degree, became ill and was forced to discontinue employment. He secured a clerk-typist position with the State of California, and for six years his study of music was put on hold.

Vivian perceived and shared his frustration at not being able to study music, and insisted that he return to school. After what seemed like a lifetime, John returned to school at California State University, Los Angeles. The university offered no choral or instrumental conducting degree, so he enrolled as a vocal performance major. In three years he had a Master's, and was hired by the Southern California Conference to direct the choir and band at Lynwood Academy, his alma mater (even though he had had no prior experience as an instrumental conductor).

In the late seventies, John heard about an Adventist orchestra conductor, Herbert Blomstedt. He learned that Blomstedt was holding a Conducting Institute at Loma Linda University, and the Southern California Conference would pay employees' expenses.

The Institute had a two-tier system: twelve applicants were chosen, by audition, to study directly with Maestro Blomstedt in a Master Class; the others were auditors. John was competing against heavy odds. Not only had he not had the opportunity from childhood to develop a skill on the piano or other instrument, his conducting experience was in the vocal/choral area. On the other hand, most, if not all, of the others had mastered an instrument, studied orchestral conducting, and conducted orchestras. In spite of his handicaps, based on the talent he exhibited, John was one of the twelve chosen for the Master Class the first and every subsequent time he auditioned. John, yearning to become the finest orchestral conductor he could be, and aching to overcome past deprivations, attended every Institute he could.

In 1981, Oakwood College again entered his life, this time offering to sponsor doctoral studies for him if he could agree to serve as its Music Department Chair. He agreed, serving from 1983-87.

Returning to Los Angeles, John taught high school in the Los Angeles Unified

School District from 1988-1990. In 1990, hearing of an opening on the last day of the filing period, John rushed to El Camino Community College, submitted an application, and out of a pool of two hundred applicants, was chosen for the position.

Soon after accepting the position at El Camino, opportunities to guest conduct orchestras increased, and in 1993, John accepted the position of Music Director/Conductor of the Southeast Symphony. The symphony Board was very pleased with his work, raising his stipend each year the first three years of his tenure.

Now wanting to concentrate on orchestral conducting, he needed a less demanding position than El Camino could offer; besides, driving sixty miles round-trip to the college was becoming extremely arduous. Consequently, he resigned from El Camino in 1996, returned to the Los Angeles Unified School District, and teaches about ten miles from where he and Vivian live.

In 1998, the symphony's 50th season, the Symphony Board of Directors unanimously conferred upon him the title Permanent Music Director/Conductor of the Southeast Symphony.

John is the first to recognize that his route to the "podium" did not follow the "norm," and to be sure, there were many moments of self-doubt, pain, and even tears. Through it all, however, he is blessed to have a soul mate, Vivian, who never let him quit, never allowed him to consider abandoning his dream of making music, never allowed obstacles to interrupt aspirations. She was and is a wonderful mother to their three lovely children: John, Jr., Vicki, and Timothy Ladd.

So, the dream is still there, and John continues to stretch and grow and learn. He remains grateful to Herbert Blomstedt, who said of him:

John T. Dennison is quite a remarkable person. . . . His musical talent is obvious; his technical skills considerable; and his dedication absolutely great. What he aims at he will attain through hard work, unfailing belief, and sweet manners.



Call Central Casting

By John Dennison, D.M.A.
Conductor, Southeast Symphony Orchestra
Los Angeles, CA

Movie companies in California have special departments called "central casting." They coordinate the selection of actors and actresses for parts in movie productions. "Call central casting" is a familiar refrain of directors and producers when someone is needed for a particular role.

READY OR NOT

Although a freshman student, the Oakwood Academy had faith in my music and leadership skills, so I was made director of the Academy Choir. During my sophomore year, **Mrs. Joni Pierre-Louis** was director of the Aeolians. When she was granted maternity leave, the Aeolians were left (at least temporarily) without a director.

The chair of the Department of Music, **Mrs. Inez Booth**, sent a message for me to meet with her.

On a very cool morning in the old music building which was located on the same spot as the new building, Peters Hall, I met with Mrs. Booth. She informed me that in consultation with college president Garland J. Millet and his administration, they were inviting me to be the Acting Director of the Aeolians—my "call central casting." With humble pride I accepted the position.

AEOLIANS IN CHICAGO

During the year I was acting director, the Aeolians took a trip to the Chicago, Illinois, area. The visit was sponsored by the Chicago chapter of the Oakwood Alumni Association. It was in the month of May when the weather was warm and inviting.

The Aeolians gave two concerts. The first was at 3:30 p.m., at the DuSable High School auditorium. The second program was at 8:00 p.m. that same day, which was Sunday. It was held at the Hinsdale Sanitarium. The featured soloist was **Ms. Mildred Willis**, soprano, while **Mr. Paul Monk** served as the pianist.

The programs were well attended and the appreciation shown was very encouraging. Mrs. Inez Booth, chair of the department, went with us and expressed how pleased she was with the performance.

CALL CENTRAL CASTING II

Fast forwarding to April 1981, I was in my ninth year as music teacher at Lynwood Academy, Lynwood, California. At about 9:15 one morning, my wife, Vivian, called to inform me that Dr. Mervyn Warren, the academic dean at Oakwood College, had called and would call again that afternoon. He wanted very much to speak with me. When he did, it was "Call central casting II." Oakwood wanted me to be-

come the new chair of the Department of Music. Before assuming the chair's position, I was to complete a doctorate to meet accreditation standards for the department and the college, and they offered to sponsor my doctoral studies.

Approximately two years later, in August 1983, I completed all course work for the Doctor of Musical Arts at the University of Southern California, and the family moved to Huntsville and Oakwood College.

ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the State Department of Education all conduct periodic site visits to see how well the college academic and other entities measure up to established requirements. Therefore, my call to Oakwood was not so much to direct a choral group, but to develop and maintain a strong and effective program overall to meet accreditation expectations.

DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

"Musical Excellence" was the theme adopted by the Department of Music. This meant immediate assessment of the total situation—curriculum offerings, physical environment, equipment, instruments, and personnel. As chair, I was accountable for the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

This article, therefore, in addition to the achievements of the Aeolians and other choral groups, addresses important administrative concerns.

CHORAL ENSEMBLES

Upon my arrival in 1983, the Aeolians and College Choir had achieved wide recognition across the nation. In fact, the Aeolians, under Alma Blackmon for a decade, had done extensive travel at home and abroad and attained international acclaim. The College Choir, with Eurydice Osterman, director, was a good choral ensemble. Their good work over the years helped increase enrollment to the extent that 1983 reflected the highest in the school's history (1,465). It was also the year with the highest record (to date) of international students. This increase in enrollment produced a plethora of musically talented students. This prompted me to organize "The Chamber Singers," an ensemble purposely limited in size to those able to pass a vigorous audition.

Following Mrs. Blackmon's retirement in 1985, I assumed leadership of the Aeolians, and another very able faculty member, Mrs. Ginger Beazley, accepted the position of director of the Chamber Singers. In the meantime we continued to advance the cause of departmental progress.



Ginger Beazley with the
Chamber Singers



ACHIEVEMENTS

Some indicators of department progress are:

- **Physical setting:** Tiered seating was constructed in rehearsal rooms for band and choral groups. Other classrooms were refurbished.
- **Learning Centers:** A piano lab and a listening library were established.
- **Instruments:** Needed equipment and instruments were purchased and made available to faculty and students.
- **Choral music:** While not neglecting our natural base of spirituals, a wider spectrum of choral music was introduced. This included choral master works sung in the original language, motets, madrigals, and part-songs. An effort was also made to broaden the scope of music to include Des Perez (Renaissance) to Copeland (20th century).
- **Curriculum:** Additions, deletions, and changes were introduced to the curriculum, bringing it more in line with NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) guidelines.
- **Faculty:** Teaching assignments were determined by faculty academic strength and preparation. Faculty were encouraged to continue improving and upgrading pedagogic skills. New faculty were hired in the area of vocal expertise resulting in several students receiving acceptance and scholarships to some of the nation's finest schools of music as vocal performance majors.



- **Inez L. Booth Choral Society:** Formed from the combined voices of all departmental choral ensembles, this organization, at least once per year, presented a major choral work with orchestra.
- **Talent Search:** I did not have to look hard and far to notice the musical talents of **Lloyd B. Mallory** who I made my assistant choral director. I am proud of the fact that he considers me one of his mentors. As the current director of the Aeolians, he has taken that choral ensemble to new heights of musical excellence.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In addition to the numerous appearances of the Aeolians locally as well as out of state, there were two events that warrant recall. They were **Jubilee I & II** and the **Kennedy Center Performance**.

- **Jubilee I & II:** In the Jubilee presentation, we selected certain Negro Spirituals and tried to dramatize the messages which the slaves expressed in and through those songs. We know that spirituals were the spontaneous out-growth of their experiences. Throughout the program, Aeolian members acted out roles, dressed in period attire. There was background singing as well as narration to provide smooth transitions from scene to scene. The programs were presented in the Oakwood College Church. In one presentation, Dr. Henry Bradford, former Alabama A & M University music chair was the narrator. The program received rave reviews. This encouraged us to follow up the next year with Jubilee II.
- **Kennedy Center:** On April 28, 1985, the **Inez L. Booth Choral Society** gave a magnificent performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. The program consisted of spirituals and a major choral masterwork—Rossini's *Stabat Mater* in Latin with orchestra. A review by the *Washington Post* stated:

The choral sound was rich and powerful, and it also reached moments of hushed beauty and intensity that demonstrated the high quality of training and musical discipline these students are receiving.

This major performance was sponsored by the National Adventist Medical-Dental Association.

It was my wish that this type of program would have been replicated at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia and the Lincoln Center in New York, on an annual basis. It remains my biggest disappointment that we were not able to market Oakwood and its music department in that way.

Scenes From Jubilee



CONSULTANT

In 1996, I was invited by the Academic Dean and President to visit Oakwood as a consultant to the Music Department. I accepted the invitation, interviewed faculty, students, and college administrators and submitted recommendations that were largely accepted.

REFLECTIONS

Even though I feel comfortable with what we accomplished in four years in the Oakwood College Department of Music, I wish more could have been done. My mission as chair was to build a quality department that would produce graduates who would be able to enter the nation's top schools of music and excel. God expects no less because He has provided our young people with the talent. We have the responsibility to help them advance as far and as fast as their capabilities permit. Today, many of these students are making a difference in the world musically and otherwise.



“The Keynote of Praise”

*A*s our Redeemer leads us to the threshold of the Infinite, flushed with the glory of God, we may catch the themes of praise and thanksgiving from the heavenly choir round about the throne; and as the echo of the angels' song is awakened in our earthly homes, hearts will be drawn closer to the heavenly singers. Heaven's communion begins on earth. We learn here the keynote of its praise.

Education, p. 168.



8

THAT AEOLIAN SOUND



Ricky Little, D.M.A.
Director, 1988-1994



About the Director

Ricky Little

Ricky Little is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He holds the Bachelor of Arts degree in music from Oakwood College, the Master of Arts in vocal pedagogy, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in vocal performance from The Ohio State University.

Dr. Little, a baritone, has performed on the concert and opera stages in Europe and has been featured on European radio and television.

He made his vocal debut in Dobbiaco, Italy, in 1984 as soloist with the Aims Orchestra at the Gustav Mahler Memorial Music Week. Following this he performed in the countries of Holland, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, France, Luxemburg, Belgium, Lichtenstein, Spain, Austria, Canada, Bermuda, and the United States.

As an educator, speaker, and conductor, Dr. Little served for five and one-half years at Oakwood College. As conductor of the Aeolians, he built a choral program which resulted in 62 tour engagements; multiple national television appearances; including GOOD MORNING AMERICA and the Breath of Life telecast; and gave performances before the prime minister and governor of Bermuda, and United States president, Bill Clinton.

Dr. Little is an active performer and is currently an assistant professor of voice at Morehead State University in Morehead, Kentucky, and director of music at the Martin Luther King, Jr., International Chapel at Morehouse College.



Aeolians and Dr. Ricky Little With Bermuda's Cultural Affairs Director, Ruth Thomas (1993)

That Aeolian Sound

By Ricky Little, D.M.A.
Assistant Professor of Voice
Morehead State University, Kentucky

Some of my fondest memories of Oakwood College are the experiences I had as a member of the Aeolians under the direction of **Alma M. Blackmon, D.Mus.** Somehow I felt then that one day, during my professional career, I would be invited to return and contribute to the Oakwood music program. That opportunity came in 1988 while I was living in West Germany. I was invited to join the music faculty, and fill the vacancy of Aeolian director, created by the departure of the chair who also directed the chorale.

At that time, the department had three choral groups—the College Choir, Aeolians, and the Chamber Singers. Once or twice per year all ensembles combined to form the Inez L. Booth Choral Society to present a major work with orchestra.

When I arrived at the beginning of the second quarter of school year 1988/89, the Aeolian ensemble was inactive. The department was awaiting my coming to revive and lead the group back to its tradition of excellence.

Obviously, there were no budget, plan, or vision for the Aeolian ensemble, but the voices were there—42 willing students. Also, there was the support of the department chair, **Dr. Lucile Lacy**.

This lovely Christian woman never ceased to amaze me by her caring, kind spirit, dedication, resourcefulness, and administrative skills. She shared my vision for the Aeolians, and worked untiringly to make it a reality. Credit for success achieved is due largely to her.

MY MENTOR

My vision for this group, incorporated in part the vision of the past. I set out to re-establish certain traditions which I felt were hallmarks of the Aeolians' vibrant legacy as well as to give new direction. These traditions which I felt were indispensable were impressed upon my mind in a very vivid way while singing under Mrs. Blackmon's direction. Having her as a mentor was a wonderful experience.

Her intimacy with music was inspiring; her skill and command of the language of music was formidable; her talents and professional experience as a singer, pianist, coach, teacher, and conductor were awesome; and her knowledge was vast. On top of all this, she is a dynamic personality, a brilliant intellectual, and an extremely successful fund-raiser. Under her leadership, the Aeolians had been elevated to a very high standard which I knew must be continued.

GOALS FOR THE AEOLIANS

My first goal was to achieve that “Aeolian Sound” which I had heard only

while listening to this group. The combination of excellent music training, youthful black voices belonging to Christian Seventh-day Adventists, and the blessing of the Spirit of God, urged forth a sound that was unique, unaffected, vibrant, powerful, rich, and spirit filled. Over the years, I have come to realize how much Satan hates that “sound” and how much I love it.

Following an Aeolian performance (as guests of the Huntsville Community Chorus) at the Von Braun Center Concert Hall on October 26, 1991, music critic David Brown wrote in the *Huntsville Times*:

After intermission, we had the great pleasure of hearing the Aeolians, a smaller chorus formed in the 1950's at Oakwood College, conducted by Ricky Little. They were superb, singing fine arrangements of six spirituals. I hardly knew what to admire most; their razor-sharp alertness, their rhythmic and dynamic subtlety, their contagious pleasure in music-making, or their seamless strength from section to section. They were one disciplined instrument, fully alive to their music, their conductor, and to each other.

This quote speaks well to that which we sought to achieve musically while establishing ourselves as “The Aeolians.”

For several reasons my second goal was to put the Aeolians back on the road. I believed that this group belonged to the church-at-large and, as in the past, could be one of the most effective recruitment tools in encouraging students to attend Oakwood College. The evidence for this confronted me during my tenure there as I met and taught students from as far away as England who came to Oakwood because they heard the Aeolians early in life and decided they wanted to become an Oakwoodite and an Aeolian also. I also believed that we could set a standard of music for the church to emulate throughout the world.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE GOALS

1. Director and department chair formed roles of agent/manager for the choir.
2. Made contact with churches across the country to arrange tours.
3. Developed legally binding contracts which addressed finance, housing, transportation, performance, etc., as well as the responsibility of either party.

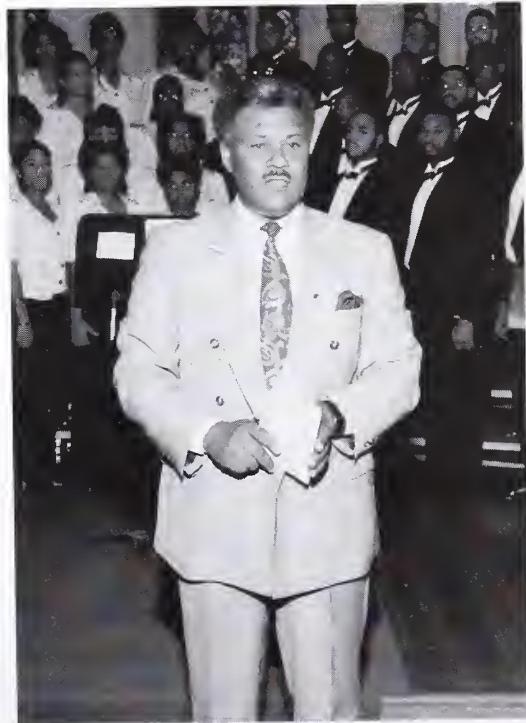
OUTCOME

- The approach resulted in good success, providing adequate funds to cover travel expenses, often realizing a profit for the department as well as the college.
- The Aeolians began to establish momentum. **Dr. Trevor Fraser** of Enrollment Management engaged the ensemble in recruitment initiatives which included a West Coast tour (March 15-24, 1991) with performances at



AEOLIANS IN BERMUDA

Photos by Fred Pullins



President of the Bermuda Conference,
Pastor Carlyle Simmons, extends welcome



L-R: Governor and Lady Waddington and
guests with Roy E. Malcolm



L-R: Dorothy Keith, Lucile Lacy, Hattie Mims, Sandra Price, Marcia Burnette, Paula Wilson, Roy Malcolm, and Randolph Wilson, local pastor.

Scottsdale, Arizona; Los Angeles, San Diego, Thousand Oaks, Fresno, Lodi, San Francisco, Oakland, and Monterey Bay, California.

- Another exciting outcome and memorable Aeolian adventure was the May 1993 visit to the beautiful island of Bermuda. **Dr. Roy E. Malcolm** arranged the tour, raising money from various sources including the Bermuda Conference. A party of 61, including some administrators and staff, arrived on the island on Wednesday, May 5. The Honorable **Sir John Swan, Premier**, and **Cultural Affairs Director Ruth Thomas** were local sponsors of the visit. The Premier spoke so highly of the Thursday evening concert at the St. John's Church that other government officials wanted to hear the choir. In fact, when the choir sang at the St. Ann's Parish Church in Southampton, **Governor and Lady Waddington** were there. Two guests of the governor visiting from Great Britain gave their address to Dr. Malcolm requesting contact should the choir visit England.

Upon hearing the music of the Aeolians during rehearsal, the priest at the St. Ann's Church warned the packed audience: "When it is time to sing, the Aeolian Angels of Oakwood College will lift the roof."

As a result of this visit, an Oakwood/Bermuda Alumni chapter was reorganized, and the Aeolians were invited to return for the opening of the new Hamilton SDA Church.



Hamilton SDA Church nearing completion (1993)



L-R: Principal McKnight; Mrs. & Mr. John Swan (Premier); Mrs. & Pastor Carlyle Simmons.

- **COLLEGE FUND/UNCF**

President Bill Clinton was keynote speaker at the College Fund/UNCF 50th Anniversary dinner in New York in March 1994, and the Aeolians were among the featured artists. Jonathan Bush (brother of President George Bush) was the chair of the UNCF Board, and in a letter of appreciation for the music said:

Dear Dr. Little:

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the singing of your splendid choir. I could have listened all night long. In fact, I excused myself from the table of the President of the United States so I could get closer to the stage and hear better. Though it may have been ill-mannered on my part I am very glad I did.

The music was thrilling, the variety and phrasing superb, and the ending as exciting as any I have heard in years. You conducted beautifully, and the men and women of the choir looked handsome and beautiful.

The appearance of the choir helped immeasurably to show the 1600 guests in the room what the United Negro College Fund stands for.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I hope you will extend to the choir members my deep gratitude for making our 50th Anniversary dinner the great success that it was.

Kind regards.

Sincerely,
(Signed)
Jonathan Bush

William H. Gray, President and CEO of the College Fund/UNCF, also sent similar word:

Dear Dr. Little and Members of
The Oakwood College Concert Choir:

It is my pleasure to thank each and every one of you for the superb performance that you gave at the United Negro College Fund's Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner on March 10, 1994. Your contribution to the success of the evening was enormous. Your singing was both exciting and emotionally uplifting. The comments from the invited guests and UNCF alumni in attendance were equally enthusiastic and appreciative.

The United Negro College Fund and its member colleges and universities are dedicated to ensuring that tomorrow's leaders are not only prepared to take their place among the world's best, but also that Americans prove ready to lead the world's best in science, art, music, engineering, medicine, business and education. The Oakwood College Concert Choir is a shining example of how UNCF colleges and universities are educating over 54,000 of the best and brightest to meet that challenge.

We in the UNCF family are very proud of you.

Sincerely,
(Signed: Bill)
William H. Gray, III
President and CEO



• TELEVISION APPEARANCE

The Aeolians were featured many times on the **Breath of Life Telecast** after our visit to Thousand Oaks, California, where the recording was done during the tour of 1991. One of the songs we did was *Hold On*, arranged by Eugene T. Simpson. We received this letter from him:

Dear Dr. Little:

Quite by accident, I tuned in to the "Breath of Life" telecast last Sunday only to hear a very fine young choir giving a commendable performance of my arrangement of "Hold On". The voices were excellent, the intonation true, and the polyrhythms perfect.

I had to let you know how much I enjoyed your performance and how happy to know that you appreciate our Spirituals and like my arrangement. Reverend Walter Arties was kind enough to give me your address.

Best wishes as you continue your fine work.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Eugene Thamon Simpson, Professor
Voice and Choral Literature
Director, Rowan College Chamber Choir

The Aeolians, with **President Benjamin F. Reaves**, were highlighted in March 1992 on ABC's **GOOD MORNING AMERICA**. They were also recorded for CBS **THIS MORNING**. These were part of **College Relations** strategic plan to make the college better known nationally.

MUSIC EDUCATORS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

- In 1993, the Aeolians performed for the first time before a national professional music organization in Nashville, Tenn., for the National Black Music Caucus. The Aeolians received standing ovations.
- A performance in 1994 at the **Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters** in Maryland resulted in a presidential invitation to the 1995 **General Conference Session in Utrecht, Holland**.

OTHER EVENTS

In addition to numerous performances in Huntsville, the Aeolians appeared in concert in several other cities between 1989 and 1994, viz:

1989/90

Atlanta, GA
Brooklyn, NY
Decatur, AL
East Orange, NJ
Fort Myers, FL
Houston, TX
Manhattan, NY
Miami, FL
Orlando, FL
Pine Forge, PA
St. Louis, MO
Washington, DC

1991-92

Benton Harbor, MI
Blakeley, GA
Sheffield, AL
Toronto, Canada
Tuscumbia, AL

1992/93

Collegedale, TN
Florence, AL
Hamilton, Bermuda
Nashville, TN
St. Petersburg, FL

1990/91

Fresno, CA
Houston, TX
Knoxville, TN
Lodi, CA
Los Angeles, CA
Lumberton, MS
Monterey Bay, CA
Oakland, CA
Philadelphia, PA
Richmond, VA
San Diego, CA
San Francisco, CA
Scottsdale, AZ
Thousand Oaks, CA

1993/94

Hagerstown, MD
Montgomery, AL
New York, NY
Pine Forge, PA

Out of all these achievements and memories, none is more precious than the bonds and life-long friendships which I established with the Aeolians themselves. The weekly rigors which they endured; the endless rehearsals and lectures; the thousands of miles and days of travel by bus; the hours spent in somebody's home waiting for the bus to be repaired (Oh, the stories that could be told!); the effort and talent given, and the untold sacrifices made to make God's work successful cannot be measured. I would like to say "Thank you! I will forever be filled with deep gratitude and love for that which you gave to the Lord and to me during our brief musical journey together. Without your gifts, none of this would have been possible."

My time at Oakwood College was too short to continue the type of far-reaching impact on a broader international scale as was the practice of former days, but I am grateful that God prospered us to successfully accomplish His designs during the time given.

Oakwood College has a powerful treasure in The Aeolians. I believe that if the institution will keep the right personnel in place and nourish the program, it will return rich rewards in many, many ways.

One final note: It was an Aeolian tradition to join hands with our audiences at the conclusion of each concert and sing *Side by Side* as our benediction in song. I borrow these words and leave them as a reminder for my students:

Meet me in Heaven, we'll join hands together;
Meet me at the Savior's side.
I'll meet you in Heaven, we'll sing songs together;
Brothers and sisters, I'll be there! . . .
Pray that we all will be there.





Song of Victory

*A*nd they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa" (2 Chronicles 20:20). Before the army went singers, lifting their voices in praise to God—praising Him for the victory promised.

On the fourth day thereafter, the army returned to Jerusalem, laden with the spoil of their enemies, singing praise for the victory won.

Education, p. 163.



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HAIL THE DAY !



Eurydice Osterman, D.M.A.
Director, College Choir, 1978-1994
Director, Aeolians, 1994-1996



About the Director

Eurydice V. Osterman

Eurydice V. Osterman is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. She earned the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and the Doctor of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Osterman, a multi-talented musician, had a very successful career teaching piano, organ, voice, and choir at Mr. Vernon Academy in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, for four years. The fruit of that labor produced two records, *Master Designer* and *Together, In Peace*. Following that assignment she taught general music, choir, and band at Berean SDA School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, for two years.

In 1978, Dr. Osterman was invited to join the Oakwood College music faculty. She is currently a professor of music, having had the experience of serving the department as a lecturer, choral director, and chair.

She has conducted music workshops and seminars throughout the United States, Europe, South America, the Bahamas, Bermuda, and Africa, and is the author of the book *What God Says About Music*.

Her musical compositions include keyboard, instrumental, and numerous choral pieces. Performance of her works include Alabama Public Television; the Southern Chapter College Music Society Conference; Women Composers Symposium in Indiana, Pennsylvania; the Presidential Inauguration at The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH); the UAH Composers Forum; and concerts in many parts of the United States.

Dr. Osterman is the recipient of numerous awards—American Guild of Organists composition competitions, Outstanding Young Women of America, Zapara Excellence in Teaching Award, Oakwood College Outstanding Teacher Award, Phi Kappa Lambda, and the Music City Song Festival. She holds membership in several professional organizations.

The COLLEGE CHOIR



Eurydice Osterman
Conductor

Hail The Day!

By Eurydice V. Osterman, D.M.A.
Professor of Music, Oakwood College

It was in 1994 that I was handed the baton to become the new director of the Aeolians, following the departure of Dr. Ricky Little. I was serving as Department Chair also. This was a most significant time in the history of the chorale because it was near the 50th year (1996) of the Aeolians coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the college itself.

Let me pause here to mention some of the many exciting experiences with the College Choir during the prior 12 years.

PROVIDENTIAL LEADING

The hand of Providence led me to Oakwood College in 1978 as a member of the faculty of music. In addition to teaching regular music classes, I was to direct the College Choir as a separate ensemble from the Aeolians which had been led by Mrs. Alma Blackmon since 1973.

Because I was not very well known by the college community, there were questions concerning my music abilities. That is, of course, very normal reaction.

After auditioning students who were not already in the Aeolians, I found many with outstanding vocal talents to form the College Choir. With that we went to work.

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Five weeks after the organization of the choir we were scheduled to sing for the worship service at the College Church which was only about one year old. The students did a very excellent job which drew many encouraging statements such as:

“Your performance was outstanding.”

“Thanks for contributing to the progress of the college.”

“Keep up the good work.”

“We are happy to have you on board.”

These comments reflected the opinions of faculty, administration, staff, and students. Soon invitations began to come in from many places, local and distant.

LOCAL PERFORMANCES

The College Choir presented many outstanding performances on campus as well as in the local community. Among the most memorable were:

- Vivaldi's *Gloria*, our first spring concert in 1979 with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra string section.
- Bach's *Magnificat* /Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy* with full orchestra (1980).
- *Alleluia* by Osterman—presented by the Aeolians and College Choir at the 1981 Festival of Choirs held at the College Church, sponsored by the Ala-



Oakwood College Church

bama Center for Higher Education. The program was broadcast by Alabama Public T.V.

- Dubois' *Seven Last Words* with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, spring 1982.
- Panoply, a big arts festival sponsored by the Huntsville Arts Council has featured the College Choir for years. This has produced "fans" who would attend our campus concert each year. Ellise Adams of the Arts Council once remarked, "Your choir is just fabulous—well rehearsed, and very talented."
- *HAIL THE DAY*, my dissertation cantata, was performed on May 20, 1989. I was pleased with public support and expressions of appreciation.

TRAVEL

Since the Aeolians represent the main PR medium of the college, the College Choir had one major trip per year between 1979 and 1984. The first was to North Carolina. Other places included:

- **Atlantic Union College (1989)**

This was an eventful trip. There were many setbacks. The main soloists were unable to travel due to conflicts. The accompanist became ill, and the bus arrived in Boston only 45 minutes before the first concert. I had to select someone to lead the

choir while I went to the piano. The angels blended their voices with the students' (especially the substitute soloists), and made the program a rewarding spiritual experience.

The next day the choir sang for church, and after lunch set out for AUC. **Bruce Wells**, the Dean of Men who negotiated for the choir to come, drove down to Boston to accompany the choir back to the campus. After loading the bus and sitting there for awhile, everyone was asked to exit the bus for a mechanical check. A few minutes later we were on the way. About 20 minutes from the campus the bus had to stop by the side of the road for the same problem which, by then, was worse. The brakes had failed!

After assessing the situation, Mr. Wells dashed off to the campus to try to get buses from AUC to transport the choir to the campus. After patiently waiting for over an hour, the audience finally got to hear the concert which went very well, in spite of the life-threatening challenge.

It took two days to get the brakes fixed, but in the meantime, the Oakwood students had an opportunity to interact with the AUC students both socially and in the classes that they visited. This was the first and only travel delay that the College Choir incurred in its twelve years of traveling.

- **Andrews University**

The choir traveled to my alma mater in February 1990 for a black history program. This program was very special to me because my former organ professor, Dr. C.



Oakwood College Church



World's Fair, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1982



Warren Becker, told the audience with pride, events concerning how I persevered, in spite of many odds, to become an organist.

- **Southern College**

A few weeks later the choir went to Southern College. The power went out during the sermon and stayed off for the remainder of the day. Consequently, the choir had to sing in the dark except for a flashlight that provided the only light for the accompanist. As always, God blessed the concert and the audience was in awe that the choir could sing under these conditions, as acknowledged by Bill Wohlers, Vice President for Student Services. He said, "It is unfortunate that we had the problem with the electricity for the Sabbath afternoon program; however, your group's ability to overcome those difficulties is a testament to its commitment to the music it presents."

SPECIAL EVENTS

- **World's Fair**

In 1982, the College Choir was chosen from among hundreds of other schools, colleges, and universities to represent Oakwood College at the World's Fair in Knoxville, Tennessee, and was rated "a very select group" by World's Fair personnel. This was indeed a very great honor. At approximately 4:30 a.m., on September 19, the choir left for Knoxville.

The 30-minute patriotic program consisted of music and poetry entitled, *America, the Beautiful*. The themes, *The Quest* (the longing for freedom), *The Voyage* (the immigration of the emigrants), *The Arrival* (the sights and sounds of the new country), *A Special People* (the Negro slave), and *The Challenge* (the success of America depends upon all), represented the historical development of America.

The choir performed the works of Irvin Berlin, *Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor and God Bless America*; Otis Skillings' *Americana Sing-Along*; Burt Bacharach's *All Kinds of People*; Negro Spirituals; and Osterman's composition, *Love, It Comes In All Colors*; and an arrangement of *America, the Beautiful*. **Nevilon Meadows** wrote and recited poetry in between the songs. The program was presented on campus several weeks later for the community and college family. It was recorded and is on file in the Eva B. Dykes Library.

In 1984, the College Choir sang again at the World's Fair in New Orleans, Louisiana. The most memorable event of this trip was stopping in a park for Holy Communion. Since the students would miss this service on campus, Elder James Melançon traveled with the choir to administer the sacraments. It was a very moving experience.

- **Kennedy Center**

Another collaborative effort with the Aeolians and Chamber Singers (under the direction of Dr. John Dennison) was the performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater* at



Recording with Wintley Phipps



Recording "Climbing to Zion" with Wintley Phipps, 1984

the Kennedy Center in 1985. A music critic from the *Washington Post* wrote raving reviews about the performance in the paper the next day.

- **General Conference**

1985 was also a rather busy year. However, the highlight of the year for the College Choir was our selection to represent Oakwood at the General Conference Session in New Orleans. Because school had ended in June, most of the students had to return to the campus for rehearsals and then travel on down to New Orleans. Those who had work obligations met the choir there. The rendition was very well received.

Again, in 1990, the choir was invited to sing *How Great Thou Art* with **Del Delker** at the General Conference Session in Indianapolis, Indiana. Our special arrangement and performance of that hymn was appreciated greatly. **Bob Bradley** of the General Conference stated that “the Oakwood choir’s part in the July 14 Sabbath School program . . . was just absolutely beautiful!”

- **New York Recruitment Initiative (1986)**

The 90-member College Choir traveled to New York for this recruitment thrust. On Sabbath morning the choir was divided into several groups that went to area churches promoting both the college and the concert that evening. Performing for a full house, the choir sang Haydn’s *Missa Brevis in F*. We also did some of my works. During this time (1986-88) I was on study leave at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa pursuing the doctorate. I would drive for 3+ hours (one way) to Huntsville to rehearse with the choir and travel when we had to.

RECORDINGS

- **Roll Jordan, Roll**—Thinking that they were going on a trip, the students prepared their uniforms, made arrangements to be off work, and even signed out of the dormitory. After breakfast on the designated day, the students collected their sack lunches and were told to meet at the church. To their surprise, they learned that they were going to record an album. They exploded with laughter. Some even teased those who brought their overnight bags in preparation for the “journey.” After the choir settled down and got set up and did a sound check, they spent the next several hours recording the album, *Roll Jordan, Roll*.

- **Easter Sunrise Service** was recorded and aired in 1983 by a local television station—WHNT, Channel 19. On the Wednesday prior to Easter the students loaded the buses at about 4:00 a.m. in order to get up to the mountain, get set up, do a sound check, and begin recording the 30-minute program as the sun rose.

- **Jingle**—The choir also recorded a jingle for Channel 19 entitled *We All Believe in the Tennessee Valley*. It was aired throughout the day for six weeks. (I wrote the arrangement.)

- **Climbing Up the Mountain** was composed by **Wintley Phipps** and arranged

by yours truly. The choir traveled to Nashville one Sunday morning in 1984 for the recording. They spent almost eight hours in the studio. A few weeks later, Phipps' album **I Choose You Again** was released. The song was a major hit everywhere.

• **Walk Together, Children** was recorded in 1987, orchestrated by **Adrien T. Westney, Jr.**



AEOLIANS LIVE

It was my pleasure to direct the Aeolian ensemble for two years (1994-96). The average membership was about 90 voices, continuing the tradition of good music.

During my brief tenure as director, we traveled and performed in cities along the east coast from New York, NY, to Miami, FL. In the local community, the Aeolians rendered valuable services by participating in events such as:

- Panoply of the Arts
- Performance of the Messiah
- Combined concerts with The University of Alabama in Huntsville
- Festival of Choirs of HBCU's
- Recruitment initiatives
- Guest appearance in local church and community programs
- Farewell for Elder E. C. Ward

The following selected quotes indicate some of the places and events where the choir has rendered services, and the high esteem which community leaders hold for this choral ensemble:

I enjoyed . . . hearing the Oakwood College Choir. They are superb.—
Aldrich W. Adkins, Chairperson, Southern University Division of Music, 1981.

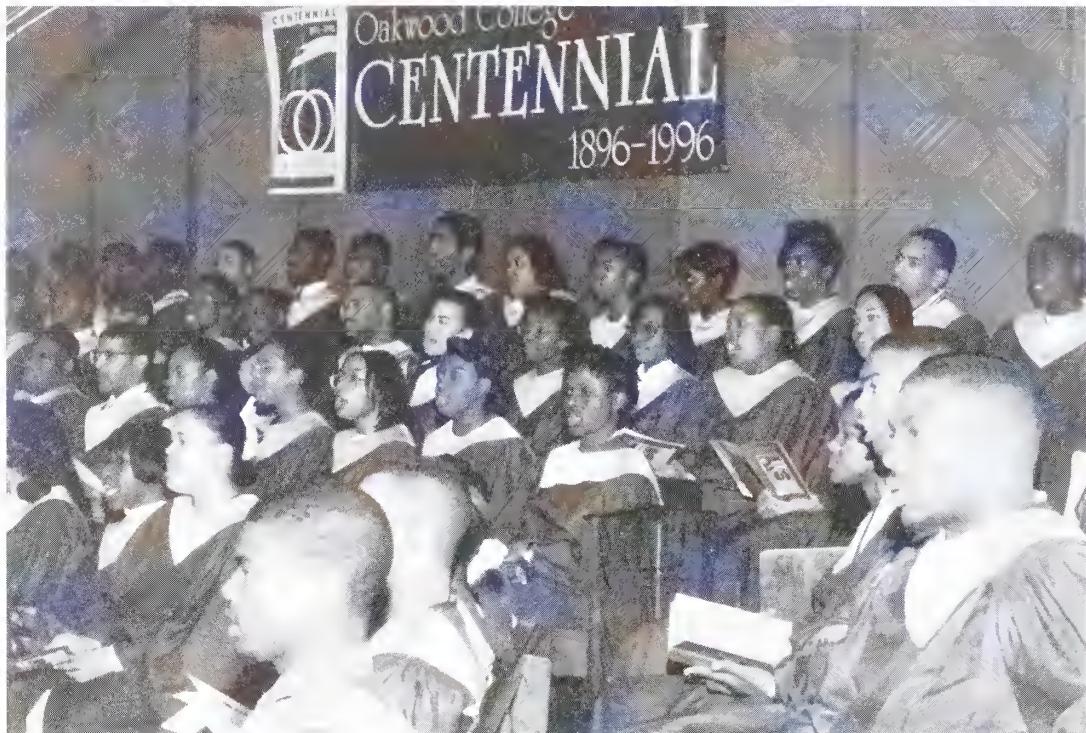
I am a former vocal music instructor and choir director from the Midwest, and have spent four years in Alabama wishing I could hear once again a choir with real ability musically and expressively. I had been bitterly disappointed until hearing your exceptional choir. You stand alone in Alabama as a choir of unsurpassable quality.—Mary Schwamer, Music Chairman, the Arts Council, The Junior League, 1982.

I have had the opportunity to hear this choir and I was very impressed with the quality of the arrangements as well as the *esprit de corps* which is obvious in the attitude and the enthusiasm of the members of the choir. They are a talented group of young people who will certainly represent our region at the highest level by their participation in the 1982 World's Fair.—Ralph D. Cook, Circuit Judge, 1982.

With pride I thank God for your breathtaking talent exhibited so magnificently . . . at the Black Music Convocation. . . . With humility I thank God for the privilege of serving as your president. The evidence of your talents and your lives will be living proof that Oakwood is "Today's College for Tomorrow's Leaders.—Benjamin F. Reaves, 1986.

Thank you so much for your wonderful participation in the first annual Afro-American College Choral Festival with tribute to William Levi Dawson. . . . Dr. Carter was also very impressed with what he heard and saw.—
Kay Pace, Dean, Alabama State University School of Music, 1989.





Aeolians thrill audience at Arts Alliance concert on Saturday.... The performance of these young people was so diverse and inspiring that it brought the audience to its feet in appreciation. It was such an outstanding presentation that plans are under way to do it again next year to a packed house!—*Quitman Free Press, Wednesday, April 26, 1995.*

My eyes were full of tears as I enjoyed a moment of sweet ecstasy. A million dollar moment.—*E. John Lomtz, Senior Pastor, Fletcher SDA Church, North Carolina, 1995.*

You have a marvelous sound and a wonderful spirit. We felt the Lord's presence as you ministered to us, and we were honored that you would take time from your busy concert schedule to come and sing at our church.—*Sharon J. Keffer, Minister of Music, First Church of the Nazarene, Huntsville, AL 1996.*

The music was wonderful, the excitement among all the participants was evident and manifested in the singing.—*Bob Loshuertos and Johana Caruso, Interfaith Mission Service, 1996.*

REFLECTIONS

The final Aeolian concert was in the spring of our Centennial year, 1996. The program was held at the College Church. The memory of this period has been captured via the recording—*The Aeolians Live: A Centennial Celebration*.



I praise the Lord for the privilege of sharing time and talent with these two outstanding choral ensembles in so many ways, in so many places, over so many years.



“The Lord Be Praised”

With a song, Jesus in His earthly life met temptation. Often when sharp, stinging words were spoken, often when the atmosphere about Him was heavy with gloom, with dissatisfaction, distrust, or oppressive fear, was heard His song of faith and holy cheer.

On that last sad night of the Passover supper, as He was about to go forth to betrayal and to death, His voice was lifted in the psalm:

“Blessed be the name of the Lord
From this time forth and for evermore.
From the rising of the sun until the going
down of the same
The Lord’s name is to be praised.”

Education, p. 166.



AEOLIANS TODAY

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Lloyd B. Mallory, M.A.
Director, 1996-



About the Director

Lloyd B. Mallory, Jr.

Lloyd B. Mallory obtained his high school education at Pine Forge Academy in Pine Forge, Pa., and his undergraduate degree (1989) at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala. He immediately returned to Pine Forge Academy where he served as music director for seven years, taking the school through its finest era of musical excellence.

Under Mallory's leadership, the Pine Forge Academy Choir was invited to perform for the 104th Congressional Prayer Service and President Clinton's Prayer Breakfast. The choir also won first place in the Quaker Oats Gospel Competition for the Philadelphia area, and was awarded \$25,000.

In 1994, Mallory obtained the M.A. from Morgan State University where he traveled with the University Choir as a soloist. He was tenor soloist in the *Missa Brevis in C* by Beethoven with the Baltimore Orchestra.

Mallory has performed with the Chicago Symphonia; the Westchester Symphony in New York; the National Symphony of Washington, DC; the Bonn (Germany) Symphony Orchestra; and the Huntsville Symphony.

Presently, Mallory is choral director in the Oakwood College Department of Music. He is pursuing doctoral studies in choral conducting at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, Cincinnati, Ohio.

AEOLIANS on Tour



Keeping Things Under Control

Lloyd Mallory
Director

Aeolians Today

Lloyd B. Mallory, M.A.
Choral Director, 1996 -

It was 1983 Homecoming Weekend at Oakwood College when I was first exposed to the Aeolians. I was a sophomore at Pine Forge Academy (a boarding school in Pine Forge, Penn). I can remember the sound in my mind to this day. Powerful! The sopranos had a blend that stays with you. High, not forced, was the blend I recall. The male section was full and strong. The basses had a resonance that was stunning and intimidating to young aspiring basses. I remember walking in the halls of the Von Braun Civic Center, but when the door to the arena opened, you could hear them. There were only fifty or sixty voices, but they sounded like one hundred. That Aeolian sound has stayed with me till this moment and time.

ENTERING OAKWOOD COLLEGE

After completing high school at Pine Forge Academy, I entered Oakwood where I obtained the bachelor's degree in music in 1989. I was immediately employed by Pine Forge Academy where I served as music director for seven years.

In the meantime, I completed requirements for the master's degree at Morgan State University.

“NEVER SAY NEVER”

Life has a way of throwing you curves that you would never expect. How I got to Oakwood is quite interesting. Never say never. I was becoming comfortable with the establishment I had begun to create at Pine Forge Academy. I was the music director there as well as choir director at Lincoln University. I had chosen The University of Maryland to do my doctoral studies in choral conducting.

I was content. I was comfortable. Then it happened. During my visit to Oakwood College Homecoming 1996, Dr. Trevor Fraser, Vice President for Student Services, made me aware of a position in the Music Department that was soon to become available. I silently laughed inside and remained polite to him. Others throughout that weekend made comments about the need for my talents at Oakwood, but I took it lightly. Dr. Fraser further informed me that I would be receiving a call or letter concerning the college's interest and he desired that I respond by coming for an interview. Well, upon my return home from Homecoming, the letter was in the mail.

JOB INTERVIEW

I called the Department of Music to speak with Dr. Eurydice Osterman who was the chairperson. Together, she and I agreed on a time in which I would come for the interview. I kept things to myself and especially from the administration at Pine Forge. I did not want anyone to jump to conclusions. Eventually, the time came for the job interview.

This was a sensitive moment to me. As a graduate and alumnus, my successes and contributions to the music profession were not immediately recognized by Oakwood, so I thought; therefore, I wanted everything to be just right. I came with my portfolio in hand. I even came prepared to sing an audition should they (the Music Department faculty) desire one. Well, to my surprise, the interview went well, although in my mind, I knew that I was going to remain in Pennsylvania and that Oakwood would hire someone else for the position. WRONG! Upon my return home to Pennsylvania, I received an offer via the telephone to join the music faculty at Oakwood College as choral director. My specific duties were to conduct all the choirs—the College Choir, the Aeolians, and the Chamber Singers. Upon God answering my prayer in whether or not to accept the call, I did choose to come to Oakwood. Never did I think God would call me to come and serve amongst other fine musicians, but He did.

My first semester was an adjustment. Many challenges did I face. My first month was one of transition. The choir in total was close to 200 voices. An exciting factor for which I claimed a blessing from God was that I reunited with my high school students from Pine Forge Academy. They all joined the choir.

THE AEOLIAN SOUND

The first Sabbath we sang as the Aeolians/College Choir. President Benjamin Reaves was the speaker. Two hundred voices sang *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. The congregation responded immediately. People came to me saying, “the Aeolians are back.” I never thought they had gone anywhere, but maybe to them they did. Later on, I realized that the saying, “the Aeolians are back” was referring to the sound. Every conductor has his own sound and his own way of approaching music styles. I have mine, just as others before me have had their styles. However, the Aeolian sound is something special. What that specialness is I am steadily learning. I recognized that Satan hates that special sound and will do anything to prevent the sound from continuing.

Upon my coming to Oakwood, I researched this Aeolian sound. Former director, Dr. Alma Blackmon, over the span of twelve years created an Aeolian sound all of her own. Powerful! Strong! Spirit-filled! The best voices on the campus of Oakwood made this Aeolian sound. Dr. Ricky Little came and established a sound similar to Blackmon’s in his own right. I remember Dr. John Dennison’s sound. He had a specialness in getting a crescendo out of his choir. He was precise and distinct in performing the dynamics of a song. Dennison’s sound was different from that of Blackmon and Little.

I sang in the Aeolians, conducted by John Dennison. In my attempts to search for a balance of all of these established sounds, I sought out the chief musician, Jesus. I prayed for Him to help me create the sound He would desire of Oakwood as we witness and minister to our church constituents and community at large. This Aeolian sound is the direct blessing and support of Jesus. He empties out the choir loft in

heaven and allows His chorus of angels to sing with the Aeolians. I have heard the sound myself and I am convinced! This is how. . . .

FIRST CONCERT

Aeolians are young people who believe in having moments of fun, laughter, and play. Being involved with the Aeolians has left me with many fond memories. Several come to mind. Let me tell you about my first concert as the new conductor of the Aeolians. My first concert with the Aeolians was at Kalamazoo, Michigan. That whole weekend I struggled with the idea of being the director of the Oakwood College Aeolians.

Having been at Pine Forge Academy for seven years, I was used to being identified with the students. This time it was different. We rode on the Oakwood College "chariot" (The Coach). Oh the joy! The bus had the college name. The inside of the coach I remember being similar to that of the coach at Pine Forge. The space was confining. There were no T.V. monitors, the air-condition did not work well, and the seats were uncomfortable and reclined on their own. The arm edges were covered with duct tape, but this did not prevent the ripping of one's clothes. To have fun, I loved getting on the microphone and saying nothing. I would just breath heavily on the mike until someone gave me some attention. Sometimes I would use my "bass" and talk. I recall David Trofort, an elementary education major, joining in with me. Then "crazy" Albert Dudley II would follow. Let me not forget MyRon Edmonds, who is the king of folly and frolic. We, the choir, soon referred to MyRon as "Skocious." Hyper Rebekah Davis, joined by Jeremy Davis, would climb the seats. **Uno** is being played by Stephen Boyce II and others in the back. Phyllis Joyner, a psychology major, is busy analyzing everyone. MyRon Edmonds and David Trofort are teasing Thelma Isaac. Dacia Ramon and Keondra Barron come to Thelma's defense. Singing, laughter, snoring, hot air, the shifting of gears, David Caldwell leading out in heated debates on religion, sex, marriage, work ethics, and more do I recall.

WORSHIP

Worship on the bus along with testimonies of the singers are heartfelt and appreciated by everyone. Every time there is a testimony time, I always remember Danielle Beck, Christopher Hutchinson, Dacia Ramon, to name a few, leading out with theirs. MyRon Edmonds was the chaplain for this particular year. Michael Green, tenor, would always have something to share as well. He would always include the bus drivers in his desire for special prayer. Energetic Michael Green would always be awake during the night hours. Sometimes he felt the bus drifting and would send up a prayer to God to protect the bus and awake the driver (should the driver fall asleep).

Another sweet memory is the maturity that these young people displayed on the bus. No more separate seating. While at P.F.A. (Pine Forge Academy) I had to separate the young angels or else. . . . Now, on the college level, these young people are able to demonstrate more self-control. I really was thankful for this. I could relax and "chill."

The Kalamazoo trip was a wonderful beginning. The trip itself was very similar to that of a P.F.A. choir trip. We stayed in homes, we ate at the church, and slept before the concert.

REINFORCEMENT

Everyone seemed amazed with the sound. I received nothing but positive reinforcement. "The Aeolians are back," was the slogan for the first year I served. I will never forget Dr. Alma Blackmon's remarks while concertizing at her church in Atlanta, Georgia: "... Thanks be to God, Lloyd Mallory has come to take [the Aeolians] to a new level. My baby," said Dr. Blackmon. Then she smiled. I felt like a million dollars. For Dr. Blackmon to affirm me, oh what a confidence booster! You see, I just missed singing with Dr. Blackmon's Aeolians. She retired upon my coming to Oakwood as a student. Because of my sincere disappointment and grief in not being among her Aeolians, she inducted me some years later into her Aeolian alumni. So for her to recognize me in that way was truly a sign from God!

CENTENNIAL EVENTS

Because I came during the middle of the Centennial Year Celebration, the choir sang quite frequently. We sang for church; we sang for General Colin Powell; former astronaut Mae Jemison, M.D.; and Attorney Johnnie Cochran. For the Centennial Closing Ceremony we sang with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, Maestro Taavo Virkhaus conducting the cantata *I Will Lift up Mine Eyes*. I served as the tenor soloist. To end the first semester we presented a big Christmas Concert with excerpts from Handel's *Messiah*.

CHAIRPERSON, LUCILE LACY

In looking back upon this first semester, I thank Jesus for Dr. Lucile Lacy who was reappointed the new chairperson. Because of her support, all of these performances bring back positive memories.

Friday, October 11, came. The choir was to sing for church on the 12th of the month. Over one hundred singers were in the rehearsal room. I am attempting to rehearse. Because the choir is not responding to me I decide to split them up into a sectional rehearsal. I have told the choir where to go by section. Well, the majority had gone. One student kept me preoccupied because little did I realize that Dr. Lacy was up to something. Yes, a surprise and a welcome. I heard students in the hall on the downstairs from my point which was in the choir room. I proceeded down the stairs in a huff, fussing, only to see the entire choir in a big gathering. They smiled and then sang "Happy Birthday" to me. Oh, did I want to cry! I did not. I felt so tiny. Here I am getting ready to fuss and they are doing something so thoughtful and kind. I turned 30 years on October the 12, 1996. What a way to begin my tenure here at Oakwood by turning into the thirties.

RECRUITMENT

The choir and I will never forget Elder Robert Edwards whom we affectionately called "Hustleman," because he speaks with such assurance. He is able to talk himself out of things. His sense of humor is very picturesque. Also Pastor Jessie Wilson.

Pastor Edwards, as director of Enrollment Management, often asked the Aeolians to assist him in his recruitment program. We traveled to several cities with him. California was our destination during the 1997 spring break. The young ladies were housed in homes while the young men stayed at the La Sierra Motel.

Memories of Benjamin Scott and MyRon Edmonds sharing words to one another make me laugh. Benjamin came to Oakwood as a much older student who sometimes set himself up to get zapped with words by one student or another. Nevertheless, one day he decided to take a shower during the middle of the day. Benjamin had gotten on the nerves of the guys the night before, plus he sold all of his "wolf-tickets," if you please, to them as well. So a group of fellows conspired. While Benjamin is showering, singing, and all lathered up, this group of guys filled a bucket of cold water and silently crept into the bathroom. Benjamin is singing away and then. . . . A yell with vigor and volume resounded through the hall. Bellows of laughter from the guys, as they run off to hide, filled the hall on the top floor of the motel. Benjamin is irate. He vows to avenge himself. Upon drying and dressing he seeks to find his offenders. What makes this story funny is that the guys who decided to answer Benjamin's questions inform him that Mal did it (Mr. Mallory, that is). Well, later on, Benjamin is informing me of what took place. He then asked me the question he had asked some of the guys—who did it? I have a smirk on my face because it was funny.

Benjamin really knew I did not know anything and, furthermore, I was not around when the incident took place. He was seeking answers and my support. He asked me if I did it or knew who did. I laughed and told him to believe what he wanted. Eventually, this would be a mute issue. The guys just got him and there was nothing he could do about it. All was done in fun.

ATLANTA

My first year culminated with a recruitment blitz on Atlanta, Georgia. Several musical groups—Dynamic Praise, Assurance (a female sextet), Positive Images (a mixed sextet), and the Aeolians traveled to Atlanta for the weekend.

Pastor Edwards assigned a ministerial student and a musical ensemble to each of the area churches to conduct the Sabbath worship service. In the afternoon all the churches would assemble at the largest center to hear a magnificent concert by all the choral groups.

At a strategic moment Pastor Edwards would present his recruitment attractions for Oakwood College with very gratifying results. In the end he would challenge the audience with treats of being "creamed" in an intense game of basketball with Oakwood versus the team comprised of players from the area churches.

BEGINNING DOCTORAL STUDIES, SUMMER 1997

My first year was most challenging as Aeolians director, but I survived, though tired. I decided to begin doctoral studies that summer (1997) at the University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, Ohio. Though excited about attending such a prestigious music school, I was somewhat intimidated. Arriving there from little Oakwood, the place was huge, with buildings everywhere. I even got lost a few times.

I took three courses. I was the youngest student in the doctoral program and the only Afro-American in two of the three classes. I studied conducting techniques, Choral Literature (which is another term for music history as far as I'm concerned), and voice. I studied with my first black voice teacher ever. She had to leave for Paris, France, so we did not have many lessons, she was good and well educated. Her name was Mary Henderson Stucky (mezzo-soprano).

At times, the work was so difficult that I would call home like a baby to my mother and vent my frustrations. I would also call my god-mother, Ruth Mosby-Greene, at Pine Forge and do the same. Both mothers would console me and pray with me and I would then have the courage to keep going on. I found conducting to be interesting. I learned a lot of techniques, but the most interesting thing was: the less I did in my conducting, the more the teacher praised my performance. Less meant more. I figured that out toward the end of the course and thus made a good grade in the course. Choral Literature was going to be more grueling. I spent hours in the music library where there are scores, videos, records, compact discs, and any other forms of media you desire. I would literally fall asleep in the library. The librarians would laugh at me because I would be asleep at a video terminal. Those opera arias would put me to sleep every time. I look forward to my soon return to the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, the school I have selected for my Doctor of Musical Arts degree, with God's help.

SECOND YEAR, 1997

It was Dr. Roy Malcolm who, as coordinator of the Centennial Year Celebration, arranged for the Oakwood College Aeolians/College Choir to be accompanied by the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra for the Centennial grand finale on November 16, 1996. In fact, he persuaded me to serve as soloist for the cantata. He became our tour manager.

Oh, Dr. Malcolm! A gentleman of less than 5' 5" in stature, but full of wisdom is he. I remember him from when I was a student at the college. He was the Academic Vice President and Grand Marshal. He wore this Elizabethan-style hat and led the procession at commencement weekend which still leaves a colorful memory in my mind. At any rate, to have Dr. Malcolm as our tour manager was okay with me. I knew how to plan tours before I came to Oakwood, for I did it while serving at Pine Forge Academy. However, I soon recognized that I was not at Pine Forge and Oakwood had its way of doing things. With a manager, I could focus on the music and performance thereof. We did not travel as much during the fall semester of 1997.

• Major Performance

The main triumph was our repeat performance (with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra) of the cantata by Adolphus Hailstork, *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes*. Having performed it the year before for the Centennial Closing Ceremony, preparing the choir was not as intense. However, getting myself ready as the tenor soloist posed the bigger challenge. My mind set was off that year. Many stressors were apparent in my life.

Among the stressors were:

1. Having to deal with two freshmen relatives staying with me.
2. Personal health problems.
3. Finding a vocal coach to prepare me for the recital, this time at the Von Braun Center Concert Hall.

Well, I prayed. Praying works. It really does. So Jesus told me to coach myself. Dr. Lucile Lacy, Chairperson of the Music Department, encouraged me to do just that. She said, "you don't need a vocal coach, coach yourself! You are good enough and you don't need anyone else but the good Lord." So that's what I did. I took my tape recorder and recorded myself singing the cantata. I diagnosed my singing. I sounded like a baritone attempting to sing high. Therefore, I began vocalizing beyond the highest notes in the cantata until the chords began to stretch back to my tenor sounds. I began thinking like a tenor too. Soon my voice began sounding more tenor-like. My breath support needed work. So I took the same advice that I give to my voice students and began wearing a rib belt. I needed to keep my ribs up and keep my sound on the breath. Within two weeks I was pretty much ready. I told Dr. Malcolm and Dr. Lacy that I needed John Stoddart, our accompanist and my cousin, to be flown in to assist with the choir for this performance. This would save on my nerves and voice by having him act in my stead as choral director for the weekend. They both agreed and John was brought in for the performance.

The Dress Rehearsal. The time for the performance had arrived. Dress rehearsal had gone very well. I sang very musically. Jesus was a real comfort to me as well as my special friend, Kessyln Brade. It is about 7:30 p.m. Almost show time. I am not nervous. I go to meet with the choir for prayer. I express my appreciation to them and John for their wonderful singing and spirit. It is so apparent that God and His angels are in the Von Braun Center Concert Hall. I do believe that Hailstork would have been pleased.

Ready For the Big Moment. After prayer, I return to my dressing room. It is now about 7:45 p.m. The concert begins at 8:00 p.m. I call my mom. Both of my parents are sitting at home watching television on this Saturday night. My parents both pray for me. I told my mom I haven't been nervous until now. She encourages me and I feel better. It is now 7:55 p.m. Kesslyn comes backstage looking radiant and beautiful to my eyes. She brings me a rose and prays with me. I smile and express my appreciation with words. She says she has to go get her seat. Well, I ponder. . . . She

starts walking away, then I summon her quick return and I plant one on her! I'M READY TO SING NOW!!!! The performance went well. I really enjoyed myself. The audience gave the choir, orchestra, and me a standing ovation for six minutes prior to the intermission. To God be the Glory, Great things He did for us that evening.



- **Loma Linda Children's Hospital Gala**

Dr. David Moorhead, President and CEO of the Loma Linda University Medical Center, heard the Aeolians at Oakwood during the 1997 presidential inauguration and decided then to have us for the Children's Hospital Gala in February 1998. The University arranged with Manager Malcolm to pay half the cost.

In the meantime, Carmen and Carlton Sampson, M.D., former Aeolians, coordinated a tour of area SDA churches which included Kansas Avenue, Westminster, and Altadena which sponsored a major concert at the First Church of the Nazarene in Pasadena on Saturday evening, January 31. I took 40 voices. It was a very successful tour which included performances at Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral on Sunday, February 1. That Sunday evening at 7 o'clock we performed for the Loma Linda Children's Hospital Gala in the Drayson Center. The choir did extremely well and the audience was very responsive. The program included pieces from *Porgy and Bess*, climaxing with *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*.

- **Spring Tour 1998/Jamaica Invitation**

Our 1998 Spring Tour covered the state of Florida, thanks to President Roy R. Brown and Pastor Willie Taylor who assisted with the itinerary. The Aeolians gave



Aeolians at Loma Linda University



Danielle Beck presents Aeolian Award to Dr. David Moorhead



Carmen and Carlton Sampson, M.D.



Crystal Cathedral

concerts in the cities of Tallahassee, Tampa, Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Jacksonville, Ocala, Gainesville, and Orlando. During our performance in Bethany Church in Miami, the provost of the Northern Caribbean University (former West Indies College), who was in the audience, sent a note to Dr. Roy Malcolm inviting the choir to Jamaica the following spring. From the desk, Malcolm made the surprise announcement which was received with utmost delight by the Aeolians.

- **20/24 Campaign/Summer Choir**

Following the 1998 spring tour, the Aeolians embarked on a major undertaking. During the summer of 1998, the Aeolian ensemble became involved in a development fund-raising campaign. The 20/24 Campaign, introduced by Mr. Auldwin Humphrey, simply requested alumni and friends of the college to pledge \$20 per month for 24 months or \$480 over two years.

For nine weekends, from May 30 to July 26, the Aeolians were on the road. The schedule was as follows:

May 29/30	Alabama/Mississippi Conference Camp Meeting
June 5-7	Nebraska–Omaha/Lincoln
June 12-14	Virginia–Alexandria
June 19-21	Tennessee–Nashville
June 26-28	Ohio–Columbus
July 3-5	Pennsylvania–Pine Forge
	New York–New York
July 10-12	Kentucky–Louisville
	Missouri–St. Louis
July 17-19	Alabama–Birmingham/Mobile
July 24-26	Tennessee–Memphis

At the Alabama/Mississippi camp meeting where the Aeolians sang for the eleven o'clock service, the speaker was the president of the General Conference, Robert S. Folkenberg. He was so moved by the presentation of *O For a Faith* that he said he was blessed even if the benediction was offered at that moment.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, the Aeolians gave a mini concert prior to the ordination service on Friday night in the beautiful auditorium of the Union College Church. Former president Dr. Benjamin F. Reaves was one of the speakers. He was very proud of the Aeolians' performance before an audience of over 2,000.

On Sabbath morning we sang several songs for Sabbath School at the Allon Chapel Church in Lincoln before heading for the Sharon SDA Church in Omaha, Nebraska, where Dr. Roy Malcolm presented the Sabbath message. The main program for the area was scheduled for that Sabbath afternoon at a large church of another faith.

Illness: That afternoon I became seriously ill. I was only able to conduct part of the concert. I had Jeremy Winston, my student protégé, finish the concert for me. However, I sat out in the audience and listened. That sound that I heard has stayed with me since. I have never heard anything like it. Beautiful! Heavenly! Pure. Powerful! Rich and smooth! The sopranos' high tessitura had a silvery quality to it. The basses contained a depth and blend that is not easily matched. Being a tenor myself, their ability to sing in their head voice was impressive to me. They have a ring and a height in their sound that cuts through the chorus when necessary. The alto sound is always a struggle to conductors as a whole. Jesus has blessed the Aeolians with "velvet-toned" altos. The sound is not too dark and not too nasal. Both depth and height are demonstrated. I took in all of this while sitting in the audience. My illness had to wait while I listened.

Following the concert, I was taken to the hospital and admitted. I wanted to travel back on the bus, but Dr. Malcolm strongly opposed. Instead, he had an Aeolian member, Ryan Dixon, stay with me and he made arrangements with the airlines for us to fly home when I was discharged.

As I spent several days in the hospital, Jesus and I had an opportunity to communicate. I believe today that Satan attempted to take my life. I suffered a mild stroke on that particular choir trip. I also learned of a heart condition, sugar diabetes, and severe blood clotting. Jesus let me know that I was His child. Jesus told me that He loved me. Yes, I did have doubts. Jesus also let me know that I was not just a music machine, but that He was depending on me to take the Aeolians to the next level. I did ask Him for more specifics, but—you know Jesus. He does not give you all the answers when you want them. Faith. You must exercise faith. In doing so, I can tell you that my time spent serving Oakwood College has allowed me to lead out in some exciting and wonderful excursions.

Threat to Summer Choir Tour: When the Aeolians left Huntsville for Nebraska on Thursday, June 5, the special pledge forms for the 20/24 campaign were not ready. The plan was for them to be sent overnight by plane to arrive in Lincoln on

Friday. Fearing the worst, Dr. Malcolm sketched his own pledge form while on the bus. On Friday he asked a receptionist at the camp meeting desk at Union College to type it and run off several hundred copies which he kept as Plan B. The beautiful, colorful deluxe pledge forms never arrived. We therefore used the ones prepared by Dr. Malcolm over the weekend and collected over \$35,000 in pledges and cash.

In the meantime, word of my illness got back to the college. That, plus the absence of the pledge forms, made the Nebraska trip seem a great loss and resulted in the college's decision to cancel the rest of travels for the summer while we were still in Nebraska. However, when Dr. Malcolm returned and reported to the administration how the Lord blessed our efforts in Nebraska—how the medical staff came to the hallway to hear the Aeolians as they sang to me in that hospital room; how Jeremy Winston led the group at the concert; and the funds collected, the decision was "Let the Church roll on."

I was not well enough to go with the Aeolians on the next trips to Nashville and Maryland, but the group did a splendid job and collected another \$100,000+ in pledges and cash.

All of the weekend trips were exciting, but I must mention our visit to Louisville, Kentucky. On Sabbath, July 11, as Dr. Malcolm was making the appeal for the 20/24 Campaign, at the New Life Church, a Caucasian gentleman came off the street and walked down the aisle toward the podium. I immediately dispatched some Aeolian members to work with him. In the end, when Pastor Franklin Hill made the call to discipleship, he readily responded. He said that for some reason he made a wrong turn and ended up in front of the church, then decided to go in.

During the afternoon concert, Pastor Hill invited Dr. Malcolm to the platform. A very lovely lady, Gloria Powers Davis, who was a former state senator came to the platform and said that that day was the anniversary of her son's passing. She had been wondering what to do to commemorate the event. When she heard the 20/24 appeal at the 11 o'clock service, she felt that it was a worthy cause—a gift to promote Christian education. She then handed Dr. Malcolm a check for \$1,000.00.

Abyssinian Baptist Church. A few days prior to our visit to the Northeastern camp meeting (July 4, 1998), our manager made contact with the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York to see if we would be allowed to participate in their worship service on Sunday morning. After speaking with one of the church officials, Dr. Malcolm faxed some information to the pastor's office. When Dr. Malcolm called just before our departure on Thursday, he received a positive response.

On Sunday, July 5, we arrived at the church bright and early. What a magnificent structure! We were not permitted to set up our instruments due to limited platform space. The church's huge choir sat in the balcony above the platform. The Aeolians also sat in the balcony to one side. I remained on the main floor near the piano. We sat through the service until near the end, just before the offering. We were introduced briefly as the Aeolians from Oakwood College, Huntsville, Alabama.

Since we could not use our instruments, I was inspired by the Lord to do a simple Spiritual. When the choir sang the word DANIEL, the entire audience broke out in applause. When the song ended, the audience stood applauding and calling for "more, more, more."

The pastor, Reverend Calvin Butts, told the audience that he would have to get his offering before allowing the choir to sing again. The people applauded for the promise to hear us again. Soon the offering was taken and the audience sat in anxious expectation. Before the Aeolians sang, however, the pastor read the entire page of information that had been sent to him about the Aeolians. He further asked folk in the audience from Alabama to stand. When several people stood, he told them that they should be proud to be from the state where Oakwood College is located.

This time the Aeolians sang a medley of four spirituals. Audience response was overwhelming. Later we received the following letter:

Dear Mr. Malcolm:

What a pleasure it was for us to have the Oakwood College Aeolians sing at Abyssinian Baptist Church. The power and majesty of the choir have left an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of our people.

May God richly bless you and prosper your affairs, and we look forward to your return in the not too distant future.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Rev. Calvin O. Butts, III, D.Min.
Pastor

Aeolian Personalities/Talents. This summer was full of excursions. I found joy in watching the singers come over to my house and play volleyball, uno, and maffia. MyRon started them doing this. Downstairs was the movie room and outside on the patio was the grill where grillers were being barbequed . . . (Right!). Jeremy Winston, Anika Sampson, and Joanne Jennett were good at cooking. Raymond Lambert was the arsonist. He loved to start fires. When Raymond wasn't around, Marvin Pitcher would get things going. I could always rely on Michael Green to stir up things. Joel Boyce was not singing with us throughout the entire summer; however, when he was around, look out! Laughter, noise, eating, drinking of ice tea and singing rang throughout the house all week.

Dr. Malcolm had the school bus to bring the choir to his house twice for dinner. He had Mrs. Hattie Mims to prepare a cake especially for me. It was HUGE and very tasty. His family was away in Bermuda and Korea, but his secretary, Mrs. Shirley Bailey, and her husband came to assist.

The Summer Choir was rewarding in many ways. The singing was absolutely breathtaking. Solo voices like Calvin Manley who came out of his shell would lead *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. Anika Sampson' Coloratura was coming into her own. To see Anika raise not just a finger, but a hand, while singing was inspiring. Shannone



THE AEOLIANS

Fourth Row, L-R: Bryan Rivers, Jestan Sands, Calvin Manley, Andrew Blackwood, John Nixon, Daryl Oliver, Raymond Lambert, Paul Jones, Bryant Goodine, Daniel Williams, David Clarke, Eric Brown, and Melvyn Warfield.

Third Row: Marvin Pitcher, Michael Green, Jeremy Winston, Wintley Phipps II, Lee Cort, Joel Boyce, Julian Kitching, Lloyd Harrod, Jason Ferdinand, Gian Alexis, and James Lewis III.

Second Row: April Mendinghall, Carolyn Pressley, Keotisha O'Giste, Heather Logan, Candace Bone, Anika Sampson, Joy Barnum, Tiffany Franklin, Gian Dudley, Shannone Holt, Erin Griffin, Kristen Seard, Margaret Best, Orishemugbemi Ukuedojor, and Myla Humphrey.

Front Row: Danielle Storey, LaShawnna Dunning, Rashonda Williams, Michelle Griffith, Sharlene Hall, Maria Sellers, Daniella Payne, Rose Lee, Charlese Miller, Lydia Husbands, Danielle Beck, Melody Miles, Kali Wilder, and Danielle Martin.

Holt would always thrill everyone with her slender self—a full alto sound in *High Praise*. David Clarke would knock the audience with his solo in *High Praise* as well by sustaining a low D one or two octaves below middle C for eight to twelve beats depending on how the spirit led me in making him sustain the note. The brassy ring of Joanne Jennett who had just completed her first year of college was singing at her best. I would often threaten to tape her mouth because Andrew Blackwood would constantly make her laugh. The boy was terrible. Andrew, born in Jamaica, but now residing in Canada, would break out in his Jamaican accent. Have mercy! You need to hear this child. Foolish! Joanne would breakout with laughter. Then Keotisha O'Giste would join in. Keo has the prettiest smile in the world. The child was born smiling. Keo will laugh unendingly at anything. Listening to both Joanne and Keo would drive anyone mad! At any rate, these two sopranos possess a beauty unmatched in their voices that is very distinct. Joanne's breath control was improving. *You Must Have That True Religion* has a short but beautiful soprano solo accompanied by the

male section. Joanne would sing those four phrases and stretch them in such a musical way that cannot be reproduced easily. Then there is the lyric baritone of the century, in my opinion, Melvyn Warfield, who leads out in *Jacob's Ladder* and Travis Claybrooks' composition of *Calvary*. As Ma Blackmon would say during our alumni choir reunions, the talent that she has encountered is so rich. I too am in agreement with such a statement. I could go on and on with the in-depth richness that God has allowed me to behold within the Aeolians.

Outcome of Summer Initiative. The summer choir ended with pledges and cash of over \$300,000, and students influenced to attend Oakwood College in the fall of 1998. One of Dr. Malcolm's strategies in obtaining such good response was the promise to send to each donor of \$480 an Aeolian CD, which he and I agreed to entitle *Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing*.

We knew that Dr. Malcolm would assume new responsibilities at the end of the summer. In appreciation for his achievements and rapport with choir members we gave him a SURPRISE party in the music building. He was really surprised and appreciative, especially when we sang to him several numbers, ending with portions of the hymn *Great is Thy Faithfulness*. He was also moved by students' testimony about his caring attitude like a parent to them personally. In response, he promised to continue working until the CD was produced, and write a book about the Aeolians from its beginning in 1946. **You are now reading that book.** We love Dr. Malcolm and will forever remember him.

NEW MANAGER, TIM ALLSTON

It so happens that Tim Allston and Roy Malcolm have been friends for years. I played for his wedding and he attended many of the performances of Pine Forge Academy Choir while I was director. Allston was therefore acquainted with me and knew the excellence that I continually strive toward. He and I met with dreams and hopes.

SPECIAL INVITATIONS

• The College Fund/UNCF

The fall of 1998 began slowly for the Aeolians. Following a successful summer tour and a few weeks of rest, we were ready for the new semester. The first major event was **The College Fund—The Patterson Award Dinner** scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 1998, at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles, California. Among the honorees were **Sidney Poitier** and **Samuel L. Jackson**. Also present was **Lou Rawls** who accepted a cassette recording of the Aeolians from Dr. Malcolm and commented positively on the performance.



ABOVE: Sidney Poitier and Lou Rawls pose holding Aeolians cassette.

BELOW: Aeolians at the White House with Drs. Susan and Delbert Baker; John Stoddart, accompanist; Lloyd Mallory, Director (December 1998).



- **White House**

The second special event was the performance of two mini concerts at the White House during the Christmas Holiday Season. This trip was really special. It was birthed by Dr. Malcolm who had spoken with White House personnel and sent a cassette recording of the Aeolians along with supporting information about the college and Aeolians over six months before a formal invitation was extended to us.

We flew to Maryland and traveled by bus to Richmond, Virginia, to sing at the Ephesus SDA Church, then on to New Port News, Virginia, the next day. That evening there would be a joint concert on the Hampton University Campus. This proved to be a beautiful evening of music shared. Both the Hampton and Oakwood presented selections. Each choir was received well. Hampton had a dignity in its presentation that I long for in my Aeolians today. I was influenced and inspired to achieve this in our Aeolians—poise, confidence, not arrogance; a seriousness of purpose, gracefulness. These attributes stood out in my mind. Because of the hall in which we sang, the acoustics were wonderful. The choir could hear themselves all over. We could provide a natural sound without much amplification. I had the Aeolians take the aisles. We sang a set of early spirituals that took the audience by storm. I could hear David Clarke's basso profundo from the back of the hall as well as Myla Humphrey's rich mezzo-soprano and Anika Sampson's coloratura. Joel Boyce and Jeremy Winston's tenor rang from both aisles. Each in a row, I hear a stereo sound that still brings joy to my heart even now. We would always conclude with *Rock'a My Soul* in which the sopranos would end in the rafters somewhere. This performance was in the key of D flat major. Thus, the sopranos were singing a high D flat at the end. Now that is a soprano section! After our Hampton concert, we traveled back to Maryland to prepare to sing at the White House.

I was greatly excited although President Clinton had to leave the country on business. A world crisis had arisen and he left. However, we presented two beautiful concerts to his administration and family. Secret Servicemen were everywhere. They followed us everywhere. Upon the conclusion of our performances, one secret serviceman commended me. He expressed to me that in his twenty years of service, many choirs had come to the White House to perform, but to him, this was the best choir he had ever heard at the White House. Now that is a compliment. I thanked him and then I thanked God for such an opportunity and for sending angels with His Aeolians to minister to such a group of people. The choir was accompanied by Drs. Delbert and Susan Baker, Dr. Lucile Lacy, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Allston, and Ms Carol Moore. I was deeply honored to have such support. Dr. Malcolm was invited but he gave his space to someone else.

Following our last performance at the World Headquarters of Seventh-day Adventists in Silver Spring, Maryland, we headed back to the Oaks for the holidays. I told the students to get plenty of rest, good food, and to bring back a mind-set with a work ethic emphasized on academics, work, and Aeolians. The proposed itinerary for the second semester was a challenging one. Mr. Tim Allston is a praying man. "If

it pleases YOU, Lord, allow this itinerary to become a reality," is the prayer he prayed. Mr. Allston even prayed for my health. God answered our prayers through faith. Here is how.

Budget: When Mr. Tim Allston arrived on campus to assume the position of Executive Director of Public Relations and Aeolians Tour Manager, he soon realized that there were no funds specifically allocated for the Aeolians and their tours. Dr. Malcolm had requested a much larger PR budget for 1998-99, with Aeolians in mind, but did not list it as a line item because it was not clear which department was responsible for Aeolians' expenses, most of which were charged the previous year to College Relations. Meetings were held. Questions were raised as it pertained to touring. Finally, Mr. Allston, Ms. Carol Moore, and I recognized that we were going to have to walk by faith and not by sight. Thus we began working. I was given the clearance to complete the Aeolians compact disc entitled *Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing*. The CD would have 15 songs on it baring the Aeolians in many musical expressions. Dr. Malcolm's office had prepared most of the script for the booklet, and contacted a local company that would complete the job. Mr. Howard Bullard would design the compact disc in such a way that for years to come, people would be impressed with its packaging. College Relations and Development had been funding the project along the way.

INAUGURAL RECEPTION

Our second semester tour schedule began in January with an invitation to sing at the inaugural ball of the new governor of Alabama, Donald Siegelman. The College Choir and Aeolians traveled to Montgomery to present a concert in his honor. Our next assignment included concerts in Dallas and Houston, Texas.

SPRING TOUR 1999

Spring Tour was a miracle. Jamaica, West Indies, was to be our destination. Remember while on spring tour 1998 the invitation was extended to the Aeolians to come and tour the island. It was two days before the spring break was to begin that Ms. Carol Moore, Assistant Tour Manager, informed me that Jamaica had backed out from sponsoring the Aeolians to their island. Up until that moment, everything was a go. I asked her what happened. Ms. Moore replied, "funds are the problem and they thought things would work out and they just didn't." I told Ms. Moore that she would be the one to tell the choir. I was planning to flee the state because I knew what the choir was going to do. So did she. Someone was praying when I stopped. The next day, Ms. Moore called me to testify. She informed me that a gentleman came into the office to see Mr. Allston. He was coming for something else. Because of Ms. Moore's countenance, the gentleman then asked her, "what is wrong, you look worried and stressed." Ms. Moore placed her burden on the gentleman about Jamaica backing out of the tour because of finances. The gentleman then asked her to define finances. Ms. Moore told him that the airline tickets had not been purchased, but were on reserve. The coach bus was not secured but on reserve and it, too, needed to be paid. The

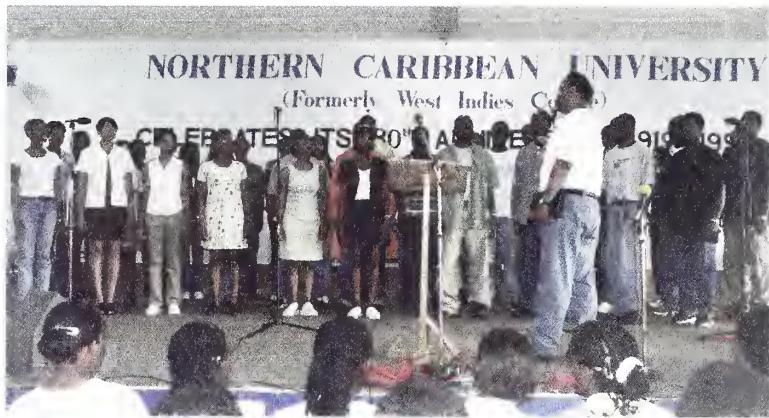
gentleman then asked her for the total amount needed to secure all she had told him that was presently unsecured. Ms. Moore told him \$14,000.00. The gentleman then did something that she says has never happened to her, he wrote a check for the \$14,000. The gentleman then went in for his meeting with Mr. Allston.

I do not recall the nature of the gentleman's visit, but Mr. Allston began talking about the Aeolians with enthusiasm. He expressed his vision and dreams for the semester and the lack of finances. Before the gentleman left Mr. Allston's office, He voided the \$14,000 check written earlier and rewrote a check for \$28,000. It does not end there. We were to leave from Las Vegas, Nevada, and do a concert in Los Angeles, California, after Jamaica. The finances were not all in for this tour. Ms. Moore received a phone call from a former Aeolian who is presently a medical doctor. This doctor was asked to give \$1,000 for support in the Aeolians going to California. Because of the doctor's fond memories as an Aeolian, he contributed \$3,000 toward the Aeolians' California trip. Walking by faith and not by sight. God was working things out.

- **Jamaica: People/Events**

Jamaica is beautiful. The people were most gracious to us. I will never forget our first concert. We were in Montego Bay. The audience thought we were a gospel choir and were quite excited. Well we began to sing. Things were going well until the final two selections. Because of our gleeful spirits, the audience misunderstood us and became restless and talkative. I waited long for silence in order to continue. Marvin





John Stoddart



Ms. Carol Moore (r) and
Gianna Norman, photographer



Kencot Church, Kingston

Pitcher, an Aeolian student accompanist and former student of West Indies College, got up and addressed the audience. I was shocked that Marvin would have the gall to take it upon himself to do so. For all those inquiring minds, you may ask him about my reaction. At any rate, the concert ended, but not as well as it began. I later learned that the reason for the talking was that the audience was pleased and excited about what we were doing, and so were commenting about it to one another. The misunderstanding was later resolved. Our stay in Jamaica was wonderful and fulfilling. We went to the beach in Montego Bay. John Stoddart was mistaken for a "Rasta." Others rode the jet ski. Some laid on the beach and tanned while others played in the water. Myla Humphrey really got a suntan to the point that she had to be taken to a dermatologist to have the dead skin removed. After this visit, she was her beautiful self again.

• Angels Watching Over Us

The Aeolians rendered concerts at West Indies College (now the North Caribbean University) in Mandeville. During our last weekend in Jamaica, I was reconverted. Keotisha O'Giste, Shannone Holt, Andrew Blackwood, Lee Cort and I trav-

eled to Kingston early Sabbath morning for a live radio interview. Normally, Kingston is an approximate three-hour drive from the university. Our driver made the trip in fifty minutes. I sat in the front passenger seat. The other four students sat in the back seat. Mind you, the car can seat only four persons comfortably. Six of us were in this Toyota Corolla. We missed goats, cats, dogs, cows, pedestrians, birds; leaped over potholes, overtook buses, other speeding cars, taxis, trucks, and horse-back riders. This driver took hold of several angels' wings and cut. Praise God, we made it. That day, I confessed every sin and recommitted my life to Jesus. Our concert in Kingston was the best for that week. They loved the soloists—Anika Sampson, Shannone Holt, David Clarke, Joel Boyce, and Michael Green, to name a few. Autographs were signed by other choir members and me. John Stoddart drew a crowd as well. This was the same night that boxing champion Evander Holyfield and competitor from London, England, tied for the title.

BLACK EXTRAVAGANZA

We were glad to reach American soil again. School awaited us. We were also excited about participating in the Black Extravaganza in Las Vegas, Nevada. We were to sing in competition with Morgan State University, Langston University, Howard University, Spelman College, and Florida Memorial College. The time came for us to depart. The city that never sleeps and the gambling capitol are some of the names they use in describing Las Vegas. When we exited the plane, the first thing we noticed upon arrival into the airport were slot machines. This desert area had been built up to receive tourists from every part of the world. We checked in at the MGM Grand Hotel. The hotel was well lit. The color was green—a bright green. You could literally get lost in this hotel. Slot machines were everywhere. We arrived at midnight and were expected to sing first thing in the morning. Thus, we found our rooms and went to bed.

Our morning began with breakfast and private worship. We all then went through the hotel to the rooms designated for the choral competition as well as the vocal competition. Anika Sampson (soprano), Aliethia Evans (mezzo-soprano), Joel Boyce and Lee Cort (tenors) were the vocal competitors. Mrs. Ginger Beazley, Mr. Wayne Bucknor, accompanist for the vocal competitors, and Dr. Lucile Lacy traveled with the choir on this trip.

• Competition

Morgan State University choir under the directorship of Dr. Nathan Carter began the competition. You could feel the intensity in the air. They were super for such an early morning call, since they got into town soon after we did. After Morgan, Oakwood was called to sing. Talk about pressure! I prayed real hard for God to bless our efforts. I did just as Morgan Choir did. I warmed up the Aeolians in the presence of the other choirs. The Aeolians attempted to become shy and bashful. I had to get aggressive and make them sing. We sang a spiritual because John Stoddart had not

arrived. The title was *Aint'a That Good News* by William Dawson. I was satisfied. The judge came and reviewed some things with them and then began a master class session in preparation for the night's performance.

- **Disappointing Performance**

The Aeolians were to sing on Monday and Tuesday nights. Monday night's performance was not good in my opinion. Mrs. Beazley and Dr. Lacy said something different. Even Dr. Carter had good things to say, but this is what took place.

The Aeolians are all dressed up. Formal attire is on and everyone is looking "clean." Because four choirs showed up for the competition, we were the third choir to perform. Morgan was last and Langston and Howard were first and second. I chose to sing the second movement of the *Missa Brevis* in C major by Ludwig van Beethoven. It called for a mixed quartet. I selected Anika Sampson, soprano; Myla Humphrey, mezzo-soprano; Joel Boyce, tenor; and Andrew Blackwood, bass-baritone. This movement is about twelve minutes in length. I had the soloists stand right out in the front. I stood off to the side. This seemed to be the best place for me at the time. They were video recording things as well so I wanted the choir and its soloists to be seen. The movement began well. Joel did his solo first and, as always, he remained focused. After his solo, the others did various and sundry things. The choir looked crushed. I was livid! To add to this, our musicians band which consisted of three keyboards and two percussionists were unable to play because the power did not come on for their keyboard (Albert Dudley II, Marvin Pitcher, Jason Ferdinand, Jarrett Thibodeaux, and John Victor). Albert, Marvin, and Jason go to the keyboards and nothing comes out. All I could think of was all the work and preparation that had been put into insuring an excellent performance seemed to be in vain. I did tell the Aeolians before going to Las Vegas that we are sometimes over confident in what we do because of our limited competitive opportunities here in the South. Boy, did we all learn a valuable lesson! The disappointment I felt lasted a long while. Dr. Carter from Morgan State helped me through my state of mind, but I still struggled. Jesus never left me nor the Aeolians. He wanted us to learn a lesson.

- **Second Performance**

It soon came time for the second performance which was on Tuesday night. This time, they were recording this for PBS Television. Our host was Tommy Ford. The producers of the show came to me and asked if the Aeolians would start the night off with a powerful song. I told them yes. I chose *Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing* Aeolians style. The choir seemed to be in a more focused state of mind this night. They looked musical. They even smiled back at me. Upon the ending of the song, the audience gave the choir an ovation. Everyone was like WOW! Who are they? We were first tonight. Tommy Ford, Actor on TV sit-com MARTIN, was reading the proctor about the Aeolians. When he got to the word AEOLUS, he stopped and asked how to pronounce the word. He being a comedian, made the choir and the audience laugh.

It took Tommy about three tries before he was successful, but he did get it right. The Aeolians concluded our portion of the program with the hymn arrangement, *Come, Thou Fount*. The audience once again rose to its feet in applause and ovation. I looked heavenward and thanked Jesus for allowing all that we had experienced. This marked a musical change in the choir from that point onward.

- **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**

At the recommendation of another conductor, the Aeolians were invited to sing with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra in the concert version of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* upon our return from Las Vegas.

BERMUDA VISIT

Our final tour for the 1999 Spring Semester was to Bermuda. Owen Simons, alumnus, and founder and director of Dynamic Praise, extended to the Aeolians an invitation to come to the beautiful island of Bermuda. We toured the island after the commencement exercises. Talk about beautiful singing on a beautiful island! God has placed gold in the vocal chords of our young people. The island received us well.



Concert at Cedarbridge Academy



Elaine and Tim Allston

Gianna Norman
Photographer



Bermuda Institute



Fun at the Beach



Hamilton SDA Church

The people treated us royally in their homes. The programs were well attended. We had fun at the beach, enjoyed the meals, and look forward to returning. We also sold all of the CD's we took with us to the island. Special thanks to Mr. Owen Simons, the Bermuda Conference, Bermuda Institute, and all of our hosts and hostesses.

REFLECTION

I find it a joy to serve Oakwood College Department of Music. I have the best job in the world. I have become like Daniel in the Bible. I pray constantly. Satan hates the sound that the Aeolians produce. My challenge is principalities. The young



Dining Bermuda Style



Southampton Church



people of this generation have a new type of DNA. They can be very sweet and kind, but then at times they are rebellious and selfish beyond measure. God has shown me that He will never leave nor forsake me. He has proven this with the Aeolians over and over again. There are times when Aeolian members have the flu and are running temperatures of 101 and 102 degrees. God places His healing hand for the moment and allows us to minister. When the vocal apparatus is fatigued and the range is less, God will touch the chords and allow notes to be sung at a perfect pitch until the concert is completed. God is right on time. I am learning to walk by faith and not by sight. I want Jesus to use the Aeolians until He returns. I want the Aeolians to sing in Europe, Russia, Japan, China, Africa, and Brazil. I want the Aeolians to minister to kings and queens abroad as well as at home to our people. The Aeolians are positioning themselves for the new millennium. Moreover, we are positioning ourselves to be part of the nucleus of heaven's mass choir. Perhaps John Stoddart and I will have the honor to accompany and conduct the heavenly chorus.

I thank the Lord for the Aeolians which He impressed Eva B. Dykes to organize. (I was held and babysat by Eva B. Dykes). She often visited Gordonsville, Virginia, during the summer months. She and my late grandmother, Esther Maynard Mallory, would sing and play the piano together. Perhaps God predestined me to continue such a wonderful and rich legacy at Oakwood.

Jesus, thank You for the gift of music and for allowing me to use my talents and gifts for You. A-men.

Epilogue

Lucile Lacy, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Music

Oakwood College has produced several choral groups during its more than 100 years of service. "The AEOLIANS: Directors Recall Precious Memories" is a unique approach to the preservation of the history of this prestigious musical ensemble organized in 1946. As such, this book is a major contribution to our music department and Oakwood College.

Aeolian directors were duly appointed to be in charge of the choral division of the department. Most directors held joint rehearsals of the College Choir and Aeolians, but the Aeolians always served as the official touring ensemble.

On occasions between the departure and arrival of choral directors, other voice instructors in the department assisted in leading the College Choir, Chamber Singers, or other groups. These individuals did not consider themselves directors of the Aeolians.

Mr. Samuel Jackson (deceased), a former music department chair, directed the College Choir and male chorus when Eva B. Dykes was associated with the Aeolians and Women's Chorus. Following the departure of Dr. Marcus Thompson, Choral Director (1970-71), **Mr. Stanley Ware**, instructor in voice, led the College Choir. **Mrs. Ginger Beazley, M.A.**, inherited the Chamber Singers from **Dr. John Dennison** when he succeeded **Mrs. Alma Blackmon** as director of the Aeolians.

Dr. Eurydice Osterman directed the College Choir for twelve years before assuming the directorship of the Aeolians in 1994. She also served as Chair of the Department of Music. It was during this time that visiting instructor, **Ms. Michele Cleveland, M.A.**, led the College Choir.

The Department of Music is greatly indebted to **Mrs. Inez Booth**, who directed the College Choir before Dr. Eva B. Dykes. She served as chair of the department for several years and a



Mrs. Inez Booth



Lucile Lacy



Mrs. Anne Galley

faculty member for over four decades. **Dr. John Dennison** instituted the Inez L. Booth Choral Society in her honor.

Several other musicians have served our department over the years as accompanists, and we take this opportunity to recognize them. They include: Mrs. Anne Galley, Dr. Arnold Dean, Mr. Marcellus Breach, Pastor Philip Williams, Mr. Michael Harris, Mr. James Wilson, Mrs. Lillian Redcross, Mrs. Winnie Rivers, Dr. Beatrice Renee Collins Williams, and others.

Aeolians' Travel

We hasten to add to the list to whom the Aeolians owe special recognition and thanks, men like our transportation supervisor, **Tim McClure**, drivers **Samuel Anderson III**, **Weldon Lewis**, **Allen Brown**, **Patrick Wesley**, and many others of the distant past. As a result of their driving expertise, Christian demeanor and rapport with choir members, our travels by coach have been happy and safe ones for more than half a century, and hundreds of thousands of miles.



Left to Right: Samuel Anderson III, Tim McClure, Weldon Lewis, and Patrick Wesley.

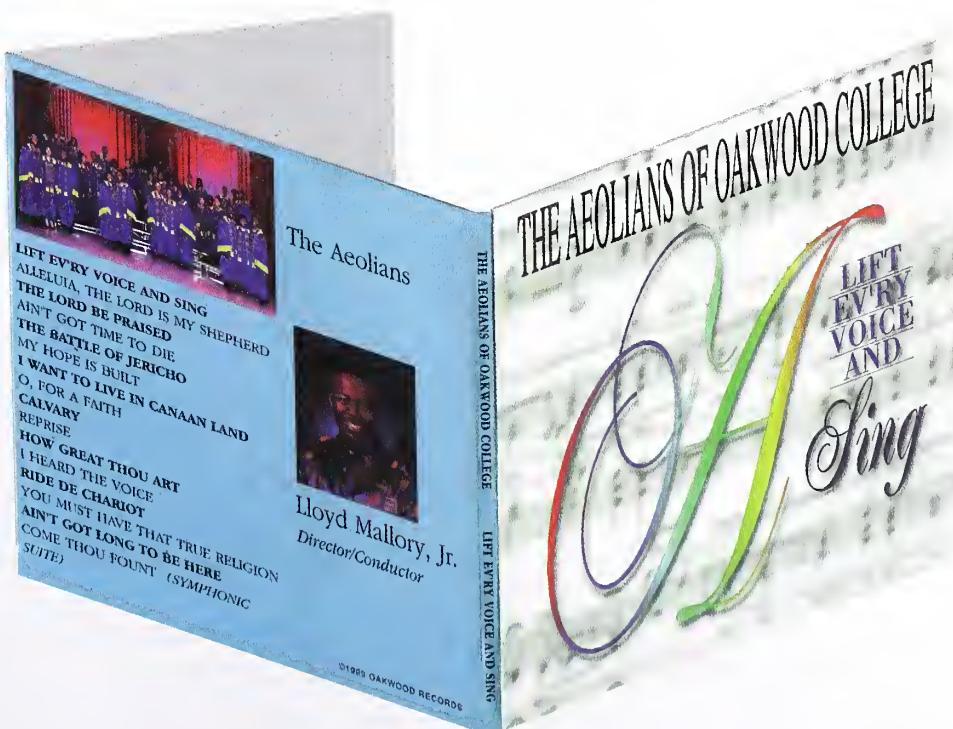
John Stoddart's contribution to the achievements of the Aeolians is invaluable. He has served as accompanist, chaperone, counselor and mentor to choir members. He is currently an adjunct professor of music in our department.

Pastor Robert Edwards, former Director of Enrollment Management, often engaged the Aeolians in his aggressive recruitment initiatives which resulted in record enrollment at Oakwood College during his years of service.



John Stoddard at the organ.
Pastor Robert Edwards looks on.

The AEOLIANS: *Directors Recall Precious Memories* is highly recommended to faculty, staff, and students—music majors and minors, Aeolian and College Choir members past, present, and future. Read and see why the mayor of Huntsville calls the Aeolians “my singers” and the Huntsville Times to write: “The Aeolians could sing passages from the phone book and still make you feel the presence of the divine.”



About the Editor

Roy E. Malcolm

Originally from the beautiful island of Jamaica, Roy E. Malcolm did his undergraduate studies in Canada at Kingsway College and Waterloo University in Ontario, and Canadian University College in Alberta. The master's was obtained at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and the doctorate at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Before accepting the call in 1968 to join the Oakwood College administration, Dr. Malcolm had successfully advanced the Bermuda Institute from an elementary school to a twelve-grade academy during his five years there as principal.

Malcolm's tenure at Oakwood represents an era of distinctive service in numerous administrative positions including: registrar, dean of administration and summer commencement coordinator, president, dean of Colleagues' Aeolians' manager, the Oakwood College Association.

He was also involved with the Oakwood Magazine from its infancy to a national and international level. In addition, he has developed, and edited numerous nutritional publications.

Holding the rank of professor, Dr. Malcolm has taught courses of psychology and religion during the past 25 years. He is also an adjunct professor of psychology at Alabama A & M University.

Dr. Malcolm coordinated the memorable 1996 Oakwood Centennial Celebration as well as the unforgettable 1997 presidential inauguration of Dr. Delbert W. Baker.

He and his wife, the former Edrene DeShield, M.Ed., of Warwick, Bermuda, are the parents of Chanel, Royce, Charene, Peter, and Charea.



wood represents an era of distinctive administrative positions including: registrar, director of admissions, director of summer school, grand marshal, academic vice president, academic vice Relations, and editor/director of the Oakwood Publishing Association.

editor of the Oakwood Magazine, which he guided to become a first-class national collegiate journal. He has designed, developed, and edited numerous other institutional publications.

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About the Book

The AEOLIANS: Directors Recall Precious Memories is a beautiful publication designed to highlight the achievements of this internationally acclaimed choral ensemble, organized over half a century ago by the first black woman in America to complete requirements for the Ph.D. degree, **Dr. Eva Beatrice Dykes**.

Memorable episodes, direct from the pen of the directors themselves, detail the joyous travels and performances of the chorale in the local community, across the nation as well as in countries abroad. The book is also replete with flattering comments from prominent statesmen, government leaders, ministers, music critics, and the media, viz:

The Aeolians, in their unique and accomplished performances, are truly one of the most gifted and disciplined singing groups in America today.

Loretta Spencer, Mayor
City of Huntsville, Alabama

I can honestly say that in my experience in the study of music, both in this country and in France, I have heard few choirs and witnessed few conductors whose results are as exciting or as elegant as Oakwood's.

Mark Russakoff, M.M., Certifie
Conservatoire Regional de la Ville de Strasbourg

The choral sound was rich and powerful, and it also reached moments of hushed beauty and intensity that demonstrated the high quality of training and musical discipline these students are receiving.

The Washington Post, April 1985.

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed the singing of your splendid choir. I could have listened all night. In fact, I excused myself from the table of the President of the United States so I could get closer to the stage. . . .

Jonathan Bush, Chair
UNCF Board

The Aeolians could sing passages from the phone book and still make you feel the presence of the Divine.

The Huntsville Times, November 1997